THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

And RENEGADE KAUTSKY

By

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LONDON:
MARTIN LAWRENCE LTD.

First Published in this Edition, 1935

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY BISHOP AND SONS, LTD., NICOLSON SQUARE, EDINBURGH

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND RENEGADE KAUTSKY

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NOTE *

This work, published at the end of 1918, was written after the appearance of Karl Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat,* in which Kautsky criticises Lenin's *State and Revolution* and repeatedly reveals himself as an opponent of proletarian revolution and as an open counter-revolutionist.

In *The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin devotes himself chiefly to exposing Kautsky's distortions and vulgarisations of the Marxist teachings on the state, proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship, and to the defence of the Russian proletarian revolution. In his pitiless criticism of Kautsky, in his exposure of the counter-revolutionary content of Kautskyism, and in his analysis of the experiences of the Russian Revolution, Lenin develops further his basic exposition contained in *State and Revolution.*

In the present work Lenin pays special attention to the question of bourgeois and proletarian democracy, discussing this question on the basis of the class relationships in the proletarian revolution. Kautsky wrote his pamphlet when a revolutionary situation was developing swiftly in Germany. Under such conditions, and in view of the illusions still prevailing among the broad sections of the working class with regard to the Social-Democracy and especially Kautsky, the substitution by the latter of the idea of "pure" democracy, *i.e.*, bourgeois democracy, for the idea of proletarian dictatorship in the teachings of Marx, had the direct aim of diverting the attention of the proletariat from the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, from the necessity for the establishment of its class dictatorship.

Lenin shows why we cannot speak about democracy "in general," about "pure" democracy, and why we must speak about bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy. In their defence of "pure" democracy, Lenin points out, the Social-Democrats are in reality covering up their defence of the *bourgeois* state, and by this defence are attempting to prove the impermissibility of violent action by the proletariat against their class enemies. He uncovers the entirely anti-Marxist character of Kautsky's reasoning about democracy "in

* From the explanatory notes to Vol. IV of Lenin's *Selected Works.—Ed.*

general" and about dictatorship "in general," his counterposing of one against the other and his proclaiming bourgeois democracy as democracy for all. Kautsky insists that under the conditions of dictatorship there can be no room for democracy and that, therefore, under the proletarian dictatorship in Russia there is no democracy. But, Lenin points out, the dictatorship of the proletariat destroys bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie covered by it and establishes proletarian democracy—democracy "for the poor" instead of democracy "for the rich."

According to Kautsky, Marx never recognized the necessity for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The use by Marx in a number of his works of the term "dictatorship of the proletariat," says Kautsky, is only fortuitous and by this term one must understand precisely "universal democracy" and formal equality. Lenin, utilizing the rich material of the experiences of the class struggle, proves that there can be no equality between the exploited and the exploiters. Kautsky, glorying in the formal equality of bourgeois "universal" democracy, does not want to see its real content, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Kautsky covers up the fundamental question of the proletarian class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat. He denies the most important thing, namely, the need to carry on the struggle for its realization. Caricaturing Marx's entire revolutionary theory, Kautsky has Marx see capitalism peacefully growing into socialism. He entirely denies the only real road to working class power—forcible revolution—and sees the possibility of proletarian victory as the result of winning a parliamentary majority in elections. Lenin's clear exposure of the incorrectness of this revisionist theory on the basis of the modern experiences in the class struggle—and first of all the experiences of the Russian Revolution—had a special significance in view of the developing class struggles in Europe.

Lenin shows that every form of class rule has a different form of democracy: bourgeois dictatorship has a bourgeois form of democracy; proletarian dictatorship has proletarian democracy. The rule of the proletariat is incompatible with the maintenance of bourgeois democracy, which is superficially universal but in reality prevents participation in the government by the great majority of the population and constitutes a dictatorship in the interests of the possessing classes.

In 1918 the question became especially immediate because of the

lack of clarity on this subject among the leftward moving masses of the Social-Democratic workers. A clear expression of the theoretical confusion which exercised an influence over these masses is the proposed combination of Soviet rule and bourgeois democracy, which means the preservation of bourgeois democracy, in the programme of the so-called Independent Social-Democrats who were headed precisely by Kautsky. Lenin shows how proletarian democracy was established through the Soviets even during the first months of the proletarian revolution in Russia and refutes Kautsky's defence of the Russian Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (whom Kautsky considers socialists) by pointing out how these parties played the rôle of enemies of the revolution and were active only in their attempts to destroy the revolution. Only the Bolshevik Party, Lenin shows, fought for socialist revolution, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, which means for proletarian democracy, democracy for the broadest masses of toilers.

The present work, a direct continuation of Lenin's *State and Revolution,* enriches the Marxist teachings on the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat with new theoretical conclusions flowing out of the assembled experiences of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia. Of the other fundamental questions raised by Lenin in this book, it is necessary to emphasise his analysis of the relationship between the working class and the peasantry during the first stages of the proletarian revolution in Russia, when side by side with the main socialist aims of the revolution there were being decided the questions of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Here Lenin gives a theoretical treatment of the very important question of how the unity of the proletariat with the poor peasants transformed a general peasant revolution against the landowners in the village into the socialist revolution against the village bourgeoisie (kulaks) and against the bourgeoisie in general.

This book assumes special significance in the present situation, when the development of fascism in the capitalist world confronts the proletariat more sharply every day with the necessity of choosing between bourgeois democracy which leads to fascism and proletarian dictatorship which establishes proletarian democracy.

Previous English editions of this work have been wanting in accuracy of translation and in the general quality of rendition. The present edition is a completely new and revised translation, based on the original text supplied by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.

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PREFACE

KAUTSKY's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat,* recently published in Vienna (Wien, 1918; Ignaz Brand, pp. 63), represents a most striking example of that complete and most disgraceful bankruptcy of the Second International which all honest socialists in all countries have been talking about for a long time. The question of the proletarian revolution is now becoming the practical question of the day in a number of states and, therefore, it is necessary to examine Kautsky's renegade sophisms and complete abjuration of Marxism.

First of all, however, it is important to point out that the present writer has had numerous occasions, right from the very beginning of the war, to refer to Kautsky's rupture with Marxism. A number of articles published by me in the course of 1914-1916 in the *Sotsial-Demokrat* and the *Kommunist,* issued abroad, dealt with this subject. These articles were afterwards collected and published by the Petrograd Soviet, under the title *Against the Stream,* by G. Zinoviev and N. Lenin, Petrograd, 1918 (pp. 550).* In a pamphlet, published at Geneva in 1915, and simultaneously translated into German and French, I wrote about "Kautskyism" as follows:

> Kautsky, the greatest authority of the Second International, represents the most typical and striking example of how lip service to Marxism has in reality led to its transformation into "Struveism" or "Brentanoism" [that is, into a liberal bourgeois doctrine, which recognises a non-revolutionary "class" struggle of the proletariat, and which was most shockingly expressed by the Russian writer Struve and the German economist Brentano]. Plekhanov represents a similar example. Those people castrate Marxism; they purge it, by means of obvious sophisms, of its revolutionary living soul; they recognise in Marxism *everything except* revolutionary means of struggle, except the advocacy of, and the preparation for, such struggle, and the education of the masses in this direction. Kautsky quite meaninglessly "reconciles" the fundamental idea of social-chauvinism, the defence of the fatherland in this war, with a diplomatic sham concession to the Left, such as abstaining from voting appropriations, verbal expression of opposition, etc. Kautsky, who in 1909 wrote a book ** predicting the approach of a revolutionary period and discussing the relation

* Lenin's articles in *Against the Stream* are included in *Collected Works,* Vol. XVIII.—*Ed.*

** *Der Weg zur Macht* (*The Road to Power*).—*Ed.*

between war and revolution, Kautsky, who in 1912 signed the Basle Manifesto on revolutionary utilisation of the coming war, now justifies and embellishes social-chauvinism in every way. Like Plekhanov, he joins the bourgeoisie in ridiculing the very idea of revolution, in repudiating every step towards immediate revolutionary struggle.

The working class cannot realise its revolutionary rôle, which is of world significance, otherwise than by waging a merciless war against this desertion of principles, this supineness, this servility to opportunism and this unexampled theoretical vulgarisation of Marxism. Kautskyism is not an accident but a social product of the contradictions within the Second International which combined faithfulness to Marxism in words with submission to opportunism in deeds.*

Again, in my book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which was written in 1916 and published in Petrograd in 1917, I examined in detail the theoretical fallacy of all Kautsky's arguments about imperialism. I quoted the definition of imperialism given by Kautsky:

Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to bring under its control and to annex larger and larger *agrarian* [Kautský's italics] regions, irrespective of what nations inhabit them.**

I showed how utterly incorrect this definition was, and how it was "adapted" for the purpose of glossing over the most profound contradictions of imperialism, and of bringing about a reconciliation with opportunism. I gave my own definition of imperialism, as follows:

Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has taken shape; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world by the international trusts has begun, and in which the partition of all the territory of the earth by the greatest capitalist countries has been completed.***

I showed that Kautsky's critique of imperialism is at even a lower level than the bourgeois, philistine critique.

Finally, in August and September, 1917—that is, before the proletarian revolution in Russia (which took place on November 7 [October 25], 1917)—I wrote a book (published in Petrograd at the beginning of 1918), entitled *State and Revolution: Marxist Teaching about the Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Pro-*

* *Socialism and War*, Little Lenin Library, Vol. 3, pp. 21-22; also *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 231-232.—*Ed.*

** Little Lenin Library, Vol. 15, p. 82; also *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX.—*Ed.*

*** *Ibid.*, p. 81.

*letariat in the Revolution,** in which, in Chapter VI, entitled "The Vulgarisation of Marxism by the Opportunists," I devoted special attention to Kautsky, showing that he had completely distorted the doctrines of Marx, that he had made it appear like opportunism, and that "he had repudiated the revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words."

In substance, the chief theoretical mistake Kautsky makes in his pamphlet on the dictatorship of the proletariat is precisely this opportunist distortion of Marx's teachings on the state which I exposed in my pamphlet, *State and Revolution.*

It was necessary to make these preliminary observations in order to prove that I had openly accused Kautsky of being a renegade long before the Bolsheviks assumed state power, and were condemned by him on that account.

* Little Lenin Library, Vol. 14; also *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI.—*Ed.*

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND RENEGADE KAUTSKY

HOW KAUTSKY TRANSFORMED MARX INTO A COMMON LIBERAL

THE fundamental question that Kautsky touches upon in his pamphlet is the question of the root content of the proletarian revolution, namely the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a question that is of the greatest importance for all countries, especially for the advanced ones, especially for the belligerent countries, and especially at the present time. One may say without fear of exaggeration that this is the most important problem of the entire proletarian class struggle. Hence it is necessary to deal with it with particular attention.

Kautsky formulates the question as follows:

The antithesis between the two socialist trends (*i.e.*, the Bolsheviks and the non-Bolsheviks) is the antithesis between two radically different methods: the democratic and the dictatorial. (P. 3.)

I will point out, in passing, that by calling the non-Bolsheviks in Russia, *i.e.*, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, socialists, Kautsky was guided by their appellations, that is, by a mere word, and not by the *actual place* they occupy in the fight between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. What an excellent interpretation and application of Marxism! But of this more anon.

At present we must deal with the main point, viz., with Kautsky's great discovery of the "fundamental antithesis" between the "democratic and dictatorial methods." This is the crux of the question; this is the essence of Kautsky's pamphlet. And this is such a monstrous theoretical confusion, such a complete renunciation of Marxism, that Kautsky may be said to have far excelled Bernstein.

The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the question of the relation between the proletarian state and bourgeois rule, between proletarian democracy and bourgeois democracy. One would think that this was as plain as noonday. But Kautsky, like a schoolmaster who has become as dry as dust poring over historical

text books, persistently turns his back on the twenties and faces the eighteenth century, and for the hundredth time in a number of paragraphs, tediously chews the cud over the relation between bourgeois democracy and absolutism and mediævalism.

It is positively like chewing rags in one's sleep!

What a lack of understanding of the fitness of things! One cannot help smiling at Kautsky's endeavours to make it appear that there are people who preach "contempt for democracy" (p. 11) and so forth. It is by such twaddle that Kautsky has to gloss over and to confuse the question at issue, for he formulates it in the manner of the liberals, speaks about democracy *in general*, and not of bourgeois democracy; he even avoids using this precise class term, and, instead, tries to speak about "pre-socialist democracy." This windbag devotes a third of his pamphlet, twenty pages out of a total of sixty-three, to this twaddle, which is very agreeable to the bourgeoisie, for it is tantamount to embellishing bourgeois democracy, and obscures the question of the proletarian revolution.

Still, the title of Kautsky's pamphlet is *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. Everybody knows that this is the very essence of Marx's teaching; and, after talking beside the point for a long time, Kautsky was obliged to quote Marx's words on the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the *way* in which he, the "Marxist," did this was simply farcical. Listen:

"This view" (which Kautsky dubs "contempt for democracy") "rests upon a single word of Marx." This is what Kautsky literally says on p. 20, and on p. 60 the same thing is repeated in a still more pointed form, to the effect that the Bolsheviks "opportunely remembered the catchword" (this is literally what he says: *des Wörtchens*) "dictatorship of the proletariat, which Marx once used in 1875 in a letter." This is Marx's "catchword":

> Between capitalist and communist society lies a period of revolutionary transformation from one to the other. There corresponds also to this a political transition period during which the state can be nothing else than the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.**

First of all, to call this celebrated passage of Marx, which sums up all his revolutionary teaching, "a single word" and even a "catchword" is a mockery of Marxism, is complete renunciation of it. It must not be forgotten that Kautsky knows Marx almost by heart,

* Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (International Publishers), pp. 44-45.—*Ed.*

and judging by all he has written, he has in his desk, or in his head, a number of pigeon-holes in which all that was ever written by Marx is carefully distributed so as to be ready at hand for quotation. Kautsky *cannot but know* that both Marx and Engels, in their letters as well as in their published works, *repeatedly* spoke about the dictatorship of the proletariat, both before and after the Paris Commune. Kautsky cannot but know that the formula "dictatorship of the proletariat" is but a more historically concrete and more scientifically exact formulation of the proletariat's task to "smash" the bourgeois state machine, about which Marx and Engels, in summing up the experience of the Revolution of 1848, and, still more so, of 1871, spoke *for forty years*, between 1852 and 1891.*

How is this monstrous distortion of Marxism, by this "erudite" Marxian, Kautsky, to be explained? Speaking of the philosophical basis of this phenomenon we would say that it is tantamount to the substitution of eclecticism and sophistry for dialectics. Kautsky is a past master in this sort of subterfuge. Speaking of it from the standpoint of practical politics, we would say that it is tantamount to subserviency to the opportunists, *i.e.*, in the last resort, to the bourgeoisie. From the outbreak of the war, Kautsky made increasingly rapid progress in this art of being a Marxist in words and a lackey of the bourgeoisie in deeds, until he attained virtuosity in it.

One becomes still more convinced of this when one examines the remarkable way in which Kautsky "interpreted" Marx's "catchword," the dictatorship of the proletariat. Listen:

> Marx, unfortunately, failed to show us in greater detail how he conceived this dictatorship. [This is a thoroughly mendacious phrase of a renegade, for Marx and Engels gave us quite a number of most precise indications which our "erudite" Marxist has deliberately ignored.] Literally, the word "dictatorship" means the abolition of democracy. But taken literally, this word also means the undivided rule of a single individual unrestricted by any laws—an autocracy, which differs from despotism only in that it is regarded, not as a permanent state institution, but as a transitory emergency measure.
>
> The term, "dictatorship of the proletariat," hence, not the dictatorship of a single individual, but of a class, *ipso facto* precludes the possibility that Marx in this connection had in mind "dictatorship" in the literal sense of the term.
>
> He speaks in this connection *not of a form of government*, but of a *state of things*, which must necessarily arise whenever and wherever the proletariat has conquered political power. That Marx did not have in view a form of government is proved by the fact that he was of the opinion that in England and

* See Lenin's *State and Revolution* for full discussion of the subject.—*Ed.*

America the transition could take place peacefully, *i.e.*, in a democratic way. (P. 20.)

I deliberately quoted this disquisition in full in order that the reader may clearly see the method Kautsky, the "theoretician," employs.

Kautsky chose to approach the question in such a way as to begin with a definition of the word, "dictatorship."

Very well. Everybody has the sacred right to approach a subject in whatever way he pleases. One must only distinguish a serious and honest approach to a question from a dishonest one. Any one who wanted to be serious in approaching this question ought to have given *his own definition* of the "word"; then the question would have been put fairly and squarely. But Kautsky does not do that.

"Literally," he writes, "the word 'dictatorship' means the abolition of democracy."

In the first place this is not a definition. If Kautsky wanted to avoid giving a definition of the concept of dictatorship, why did he choose this particular approach to the question?

Secondly, it is obviously wrong. A liberal naturally speaks of "democracy" in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: for what class? Everybody knows, for instance (and Kautsky the "historian" also knows it), that the rebellions of and even the strong ferment among the slaves in antiquity immediately revealed the fact that in essence the state of antiquity was the *dictatorship of the slave-owners.* Did this dictatorship abolish democracy *among* and *for* the *slave owners?* Everybody knows that it did not.

The "Marxist," Kautsky, uttered absolute nonsense and an untruth, because he "forgot" the class-struggle. . . .

In order to transform Kautsky's liberal and lying assertion into a Marxian and true one one must say: dictatorship does not necessarily mean the abolition of democracy for the class that exercises dictatorship over other classes; but it certainly does mean the abolition (or very material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) of democracy for that class over which, or against which, the dictatorship is exercised. But however true this assertion may be, it does not give a definition of dictatorship.

Let us examine Kautsky's next sentence:

But of course, taken literally, this word also means the undivided rule of a single individual unrestricted by any laws.

Like a blind puppy casually sniffing in one direction and then in another, Kautsky accidentally stumbled upon *one* true idea (namely, that dictatorship is power unrestricted by any laws) but he *failed* to give a definition of dictatorship, and, moreover, he uttered an obvious historical falsehood, *viz.*, that dictatorship means the power of a single person. This is not even grammatically correct, since the power of dictatorship can also be exercised by a handful of persons, by an oligarchy, by a class, etc.

Kautsky then goes on to point out the difference between dictatorship and despotism, but, although what he says is obviously incorrect, we shall not dwell upon it, as it is wholly irrelevant to the question that interests us. Everybody knows Kautsky's inclination to turn from the twentieth to the eighteenth century, and from the eighteenth century to classical antiquity, and I hope that the German proletariat, after it has established its dictatorship, will take this inclination into account and appoint him, say, teacher of ancient history at some secondary school. To try to evade a definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat by philosophising about despotism is either extreme stupidity or very clumsy trickery.

As a result, we find that having undertaken to discuss dictatorship, Kautsky has said a great deal which is contrary to truth, but has not given us a definition! Yet, without trusting his mental faculties, he could have had recourse to his memory and taken from his "pigeon-holes" all those instances when Marx spoke of the dictatorship. Had he done so, he would certainly have arrived, either at the following definition, or one in the main coinciding with it.

Dictatorship is power, based directly upon force, and unrestricted by any laws.

The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is power won and maintained by the violence of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, power that is unrestricted by any laws.

And this simple truth, a truth that is as plain as noonday to every class-conscious worker (representing the masses, and not the upper stratum of petty-bourgeois scoundrels who have been bribed by the capitalists, such as are the social-imperialists of all countries), this truth, which is obvious to every representative of the exploited classes which are fighting for their emancipation, this truth, which is indisputable for every Marxist, has to be "extorted by force" from that most learned gentleman, Mr. Kautsky. How is such a phenomenon to be explained? Simply by that spirit of

servility with which the leaders of the Second International, who have become contemptible sycophants in the service of the bourgeoisie, have become imbued.

First, Kautsky committed a subterfuge by proclaiming the obvious nonsense that the word dictatorship, in its literal sense, means the dictatorship of a single person, and then, on the strength of this subterfuge, he declared that Marx's words about dictatorship of a class must not be taken literally (but must be taken to mean that dictatorship does not connote revolutionary violence, but merely "the peaceful winning of a majority under bourgeois"—mark you—democracy).

One must, if you please, distinguish between a "state of things" and a "form of government!" A wonderfully profound distinction; it is like drawing a distinction between the "state" of stupidity of a person who reasons foolishly and the "form" of this stupidity!

Kautsky found it necessary to interpret dictatorship as a "state of domination" (this is the literal expression he uses on the very next page, p. 21), because, then, *revolutionary violence, violent revolution, disappears.* A "state of domination" is a state in which any majority finds itself under a "democracy." Thanks to such a fraudulent trick, *revolution* easily disappears.

But this trick is too crude and will not save Kautsky. One cannot do away with the fact that a dictatorship presupposes and means a "state" (very disagreeable to all renegades) of revolutionary violence of one class against another. The absurd distinction between a "state of things" and "form of government" becomes patent. It is doubly and trebly stupid to speak of forms of government in this connection, for every child knows that monarchy and republic are two different forms of government. It must be explained to Mr. Kautsky that both these forms of government, as well as all transitional forms of government under capitalism, are but so many varieties of the *bourgeois state, i.e.,* of the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.*

Lastly, to speak of forms of government is not only a stupid, but also a very crude falsification of Marx, who very clearly spoke of this or that form or type of *state*, and not of forms of government.

The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it

of a *new one* which, in the words of Engels, "was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word." *

But Kautsky found it necessary to gloss this over and to lie—his renegade position demanded it.

See what miserable evasions he has to resort to for this purpose.

First evasion:

> That Marx did not have in view in this connection a form of government is proved by the fact that he was of the opinion that in England and America the transition can take place peacefully, *i.e.*, in a democratic way.

The *form of government* has nothing to do with the question, for there are monarchies which are not typical of the bourgeois state, for instance, such as have no militarism, and there are republics which are quite typical in this respect, *i.e.*, having militarism and a bureaucracy. This is a universally known historical and political fact, and Kautsky will not succeed in falsifying it.

If Kautsky had wanted to argue in a serious and honest manner he would have asked himself: Are there historical laws governing revolution which know of no exception? And the reply would have been: No, no such laws exist. These laws only apply to what is typical, to what Marx once termed the "ideal," in the sense of an average, normal, typical capitalism.

Further, was there in the seventies of last century anything which made England and America an exception in regard to what we *are now discussing?* It will be obvious to any one familiar with the requirements of science in the domain of historical problems that such a question must be put. To fail to put it is tantamount to falsifying science, to engaging in sophistry. And the question having been put, there can be no doubt as to the reply: The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is violence against the bourgeoisie; and the necessity for such violence is *particularly* created, as Marx and Engels have repeatedly explained in detail (particularly in *The Civil War in France* ** and in the preface to it) by the existence of militarism and bureaucracy. But it is precisely these institutions that were non-existent in England and America in the seventies of the nineteenth century when Marx made his observations (they *do* exist in England and in America *now*).

* Letter of Engels to Bebel, March 18-28, 1875, in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, p. 57.—*Ed.*

** Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (International Publishers).—*Ed.*

Kautsky has had to be dishonest literally at every step in order to cover up his renegacy!

And note how he unwittingly betrayed his cloven hoof; he wrote: "peacefully, *i.e.*, in a *democratic way*."

In defining the term "dictatorship," Kautsky tried his utmost to conceal from the reader the fundamental symptom of this concept, namely, revolutionary *violence*. But now the truth has emerged: the point under discussion is the antithesis between *peaceful* and *violent revolutions*.

That is the whole point. Kautsky had to resort to all these evasions, sophisms and fraudulent falsifications in order to *dissociate* himself from *violent* revolution, and to conceal his renunciation of it, his desertion to the side of *Liberal*-Labour politics, *i.e.*, to the side of the bourgeoisie. That is the whole point.

Kautsky, the "historian," so shamelessly falsifies history that he forgets the fundamental fact that pre-monopolist capitalism which reached its apogee in the seventies of the nineteenth century was, in virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits (which were most typical in England and America), distinguished for its attachment to peace and freedom. Imperialism, *i.e.*, monopoly capitalism, which has finally matured only in the twentieth century, is, in virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits, distinguished by the least attachment to peace and freedom, and by the greatest and universal development of militarism everywhere. To "fail to notice" this in discussing the question as to the extent to which a peaceful or violent revolution is typical or probable, is to stoop to the position of a common lackey of the bourgeoisie.

Second evasion:

The Paris Commune was a dictatorship of the proletariat, but it was elected by *universal suffrage*, the bourgeoisie was not deprived of the franchise, *i.e.*, the Commune was elected "democratically." And Kautsky says elatedly:

> The dictatorship of the proletariat, for him (Marx) is a state of things which necessarily follows from pure democracy, if the proletariat represents the overwhelming majority (*bei uberwiegendem Proletariat*). (P. 21.)

This argument of Kautsky's is so amusing that one almost suffers from an *embarras des richesses* (an embarrassment due to the wealth of replies that can be made to it). Firstly, it is well known that the flower, the General Staff, the upper strata of the bourgeoisie

had fled from Paris to Versailles. In Versailles was the "socialist" Louis Blanc—which circumstance, by the way, proves the falsity of Kautsky's assertion that "all trends" of socialism took part in the Paris Commune. Is it not ridiculous to represent the division of the inhabitants of Paris into two belligerent camps, in one of which the entire militant and politically active section of the bourgeoisie had concentrated, as "pure democracy," with "universal suffrage"?

Secondly, the Paris Commune waged war against Versailles as the workers' government of *France* waging war against the bourgeois government. What has "pure democracy" and "universal suffrage" got to do with the case, when Paris decided the fate of France? When Marx expressed the opinion that the Paris Commune had committed a mistake in failing to seize the bank, which belonged to the whole of France,* did he take the principles and practice of "pure democracy" as his starting point?

Obviously, Kautsky writes his books in a country where the people are forbidden by the police to laugh in "crowds," otherwise Kautsky would have been killed by laughter.

Thirdly, I would respectfully remind Mr. Kautsky, who knows Marx and Engels by heart, of the following appreciation of the Paris Commune by Engels from the point of view of "pure democracy":

> Have these gentlemen (the anti-authoritarians) ever seen a revolution? Revolution is undoubtedly the most authoritarian thing in the world. Revolution is an act in which one section of the population imposes its will upon the other by means of rifles, bayonets and guns, all of which are exceedingly authoritarian implements. And the victorious party is necessarily compelled to maintain its rule by means of that fear which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. If the Paris Commune had not employed the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie, would it have maintained itself more than twenty-four hours? Are we not, on the contrary, justified in reproaching the Commune for having employed this authority too little? **

Here you have your "pure democracy!" How Engels would have ridiculed the petty-bourgeois, the "Social-Democrat" (in the French sense, of the 'forties of last century, and in the European sense of 1914-1918) who would have taken it into his head to talk about "pure democracy" in relation to a society divided into classes!

* *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.—*Ed.*

** F. Engels, "*Ueber das Autoritätsprinzip,*" *Neue Zeit*, 1913-14, Vol. I, p. 39.—*Ed.*

But enough. It is impossible to enumerate all the absurdities uttered by Kautsky, since every phrase he utters is a bottomless pit of renegacy.

Marx and Engels analysed the Paris Commune in a most detailed manner and showed that its merit lies in its attempt *to smash, to break up* the "existing state machine." Marx and Engels considered this conclusion to be so important that it was the *only* amendment they made in 1872 to the "obsolete" *Communist Manifesto*.* Marx and Engels showed that the Paris Commune abolished the army and the bureaucracy, abolished *parliamentarism*, destroyed "that parasitic excrescence, the state," etc.; but the all-wise Kautsky, donning his night-cap, repeats the fairytale about "pure democracy," which has been told a thousand times by liberal professors.

Not unjustly did Rosa Luxemburg declare on August 4, 1914,** that German Social-Democracy was now a *stinking corpse*.

Third evasion:

> When we speak of the dictatorship as a form of government we cannot speak of the dictatorship of a class, since a class, as we have already pointed out, can only dominate, but not govern.

It is "organisations" or "parties" that govern!

You are talking nonsense, sheer nonsense, Mr. Muddled-Councillor.*** Dictatorship is not a "form of government"; that is ridiculous nonsense. And Marx does not speak of the form of *government*, but of the form or type of *state*. That is something altogether different. It is altogether wrong, also, to say that a class cannot govern. Such an absurdity can only be uttered by a parliamentary *cretin* who sees nothing but bourgeois parliaments, who has noticed nothing but "ruling parties." Any European country will provide Kautsky with examples of government by a *ruling class*, as for instance, by the landlords in the Middle Ages, in spite of their insufficient organisation.

To sum up: Kautsky in the most incredible manner has distorted the concept, dictatorship of the proletariat, and has transformed Marx into a common liberal, *i.e.*, he himself has rolled down to the level of a liberal who utters banal phrases about "pure democ-

* See their introduction to German edition of 1872.—*Ed.*

** The day the Social-Democratic Deputies in the Reichstag voted credits for the War.—*Ed.*

*** Lenin refers ironically to the fact that the Social-Democratic government, after coming to power, conferred upon Kautsky the title of State Councillor.—*Ed.*

racy," embellishes and glosses over the class content of *bourgeois* democracy, and, above all, is mortally afraid of the oppressed class resorting to *revolutionary violence.* By "interpreting" the concept revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat to mean that the oppressed class will not use revolutionary violence against its oppressors, Kautsky beat the world record in the liberal distortion of Marx, and the renegade Bernstein has been proved to be a mere puppy compared with the renegade Kautsky.

BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIAN DEMOCRACY

The question which Kautsky has so hopelessly confused really stands as follows:

If we are not to mock at common sense and history, it is obvious that we cannot speak of "pure democracy" so long as different *classes* exist; we can only speak of *class* democracy. (One may say in parenthesis that "pure democracy" is not only an *ignorant* phrase, revealing lack of understanding of the class struggle and of the nature of the state, but also a hollow phrase, since in communist society democracy will gradually change and become a habit, and finally *wither away;* but there will never be "pure democracy.")

"Pure democracy" is the mendacious phrase of a liberal who wants to fool the working class. History knows of bourgeois democracy which takes the place of feudalism, and of proletarian democracy which takes the place of bourgeois democracy.

When Kautsky devotes scores of pages to "proving" that bourgeois democracy is progressive compared with mediævalism, and that the proletariat must utilise it in its struggle against the bourgeoisie, he is just indulging in the usual liberal twaddle to fool the workers. This is a truism not only for educated Germany, but also for uneducated Russia. Kautsky simply throws "learned" dust into the eyes of the workers when, with a serious mien, he talks about Weitling and the Jesuits of Paraguay [1] and many other things, but *refrains* from telling them about the *bourgeois* essence of contemporary, *i.e., capitalist democracy.*

Kautsky takes from Marxism what is acceptable to the liberals, to the bourgeoisie (*viz.,* the criticism of the Middle Ages, and the progressive historical rôle of capitalism in general and of capitalist democracy in particular) and throws away, ignores, glosses over all that in Marxism which is *unacceptable* to the bourgeoisie (the revo-

lutionary violence of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie with a view to the destruction of the latter). That is why Kautsky, in virtue of his objective position and irrespective of what his subjective convictions may be, inevitably becomes the lackey of the bourgeoisie.

Bourgeois democracy, while constituting a great historical advance in comparison with mediævalism, nevertheless remains, and cannot but remain under capitalism, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a trap and a snare and a deception for the exploited, for the poor. It is this simple truth, which forms the essential part of Marx's teachings, that Kautsky, the "Marxist," has failed to understand. On this fundamental question Kautsky gives us what is agreeable to the bourgeoisie, instead of a scientific criticism of those conditions which make all bourgeois democracy only a democracy for the rich.

Let us first recall to the mind of the most learned Mr. Kautsky the theoretical propositions of Marx and Engels, which erudite Kautsky has so disgracefully "forgotten" (in order to please the bourgeoisie), and then we shall explain the question very popularly.

Not only the ancient and feudal, but also the

contemporary representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labour by capital. (Engels, *Origin of the Family.*)

As the state is only a transitional phenomenon which must be made use of in struggle, in the revolution, in order forcibly to crush our antagonists, it is pure absurdity to speak of a people's free state. As long as the proletariat still needs the state, it needs it, not in the interests of freedom, but for the purpose of crushing its antagonists; and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom, then the state, as such, ceases to exist. (Engels in his letter to Bebel, March 28, 1875.*)

In reality . . . the state is nothing more than a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy. . . . (Engels in his preface to Marx's *Civil War.***)

Universal suffrage is an index of the maturity of the working class. *It cannot and never will be more in the present state.* (Engels, *Origin of the Family.*)

Mr. Kautsky tediously chews the cud over the first part of this proposition, which is agreeable to the bourgeoisie, but, as a renegade, he conveniently omits the second half (which we italicised), which it not agreeable to the bourgeoisie!

* *Critique of the Gotha Programme,* p. 58.—*Ed.*
** *The Civil War in France,* p. 19.—*Ed.*

> The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time. . . . Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workmen and managers in his business. (Marx, *Civil War in France.**)

Every one of these propositions, which are well known to the most learned Mr. Kautsky, is a direct challenge to him and lays bare his renegacy. Nowhere in his pamphlet does Kautsky reveal the slightest understanding of these truths. The whole of his pamphlet is but a mockery of Marxism.

Take the fundamental laws of contemporary states, take their administration, take the right of assembly, freedom of the press, and "equality of all citizens before the law," and you will see at every step evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy, with which every honest and class-conscious worker is familiar. There is not a single state, however democratic, which does not contain loopholes or limiting clauses in its Constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the legal possibility of despatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a "disturbance of the peace," *i.e.,* in case the exploited class "disturbs" its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner. Kautsky shamelessly embellishes bourgeois democracy and hushes up, for instance, what the most democratic and republican bourgeoisie of America and Switzerland do against workers on strike.

Oh! the wise and most learned Kautsky remains silent about these things! This pundit and statesman does not realise that to remain silent on this matter is despicable. He prefers to tell the workers nursery tales to the effect that democracy means "protecting minorities." It is incredible, but it is a fact. In the 1918th Year after the birth of Christ, in the fifth year of the world imperialist slaughter and the strangulation of internationalist minorities in all "democracies of the world" (*i.e.,* those who have not despicably betrayed socialism, like the Renaudels, and the Longuets, the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, the Hendersons and the Webbs, etc.), the learned Mr. Kautsky sweetly sings the praises of the "protection of minorities." Those who are interested may read this on page 15 of Kautsky's pamphlet. And on page 16 this learned individual tells you about the Whigs and Tories in England in the eighteenth century!

* *Ibid.,* pp. 40 and 42.—*Ed.*

Oh, wonderful erudition! Oh, refined servility towards the bourgeoisie! Oh, civilised belly-crawling and boot-licking before the bourgeoisie! If I were a Krupp or a Scheidemann, a Clemenceau or a Renaudel, I would give Mr. Kautsky millions, reward him with Judas kisses, would praise him before the workers, and urge "socialist unity" with "respectable" men like him. To write pamphlets against the dictatorship of the proletariat, to talk about the Whigs and Tories in England in the eighteenth century, to assert that democracy means "protecting minorities," and remain silent about *pogroms* against internationalists in the "democratic" republic of America—is this not rendering lackey's service to the bourgeoisie?

The learned Mr. Kautsky "forgot"—no doubt accidentally—a "bagatelle," namely, that the ruling party in a bourgeois democracy extends the protection of minorities only to the other *bourgeois* party, while on all *serious, profound and fundamental* issues, the working class gets martial law and pogroms, instead of the "protection of minorities." *The more developed democracy is, the more imminent is the danger of pogroms or civil war in connection with any profound political divergence which is dangerous for the bourgeoisie.* The learned Mr. Kautsky could have studied this "law" of bourgeois democracy in connection with the Dreyfus affair in republican France, with the lynching of Negroes and internationalists in the democratic republic of America, with the case of Ireland and Ulster in democratic England, with the persecution of the Bolsheviks and the organisation of pogroms against them, in April, 1917, in the democratic republic of Russia. I have purposely chosen examples, not only from the period of the war but also from the pre-war period. But sentimental Mr. Kautsky is pleased to shut his eyes to these facts of the twentieth century, and instead to tell the workers the wonderfully new, and remarkably interesting, the unusually instructive, and incredibly important things about the Tories and Whigs of the eighteenth century!

Take the bourgeois parliaments. Can it be that learned Mr. Kautsky has never heard that the *more* democracy is developed, the *more* the bourgeois parliaments fall under the control of the Stock Exchange and the bankers? This, of course, does not mean that we must not use bourgeois parliaments (the Bolsheviks have made better use of them than any other party in the world, for in 1912-1914 we captured the entire workers' curia in the fourth Duma).[2] But it does mean that only a Liberal can forget the historical limitations

and conventional character of bourgeois parliamentarism as Kautsky does. Even in the most democratic bourgeois states the oppressed masses meet at every step the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the "democracy" of the capitalists, and the thousand and one *de facto* limitations and restrictions which make the proletarians *wage-slaves.* It is precisely this contradiction that opens the eyes of the masses to the rottenness, hypocrisy, and mendacity of capitalism. It is this contradiction which the agitators and propagandists of socialism are constantly showing up to the masses, *in order to prepare them* for the revolution. And now that the era of revolution has begun, Kautsky turns his back upon it and begins to extol the charms of moribund bourgeois democracy!

Proletarian democracy, of which the Soviet government constitutes one of the forms, has given a development and expansion of democracy hitherto unprecedented in the world, precisely for the vast majority of the population, for the exploited and for the toilers. To write a whole pamphlet about democracy, as Kautsky did (in which he devotes two pages to dictatorship and scores of pages to "pure democracy") and not notice this fact, is tantamount to distorting the subject in a liberal way.

Take foreign policy. In no bourgeois state, not even in the most democratic one, is it carried on openly. In all democratic countries—France, Switzerland, America or England—the masses are deceived in an incomparably wider and more subtle manner than in other countries. The Soviet government, in a revolutionary manner, has torn the veil of mystery from foreign policy. Kautsky has not noticed this and remains silent about it, although in the present era of predatory wars and secret treaties for the "division of spheres of influences" (*i.e.*, for the partition of the world among the capitalist bandits), the subject is one of cardinal importance, for it is a matter that determines the question of peace, it is a question of life and death for tens of millions of people.

Take the organisation of the state. Kautsky clutches at all manner of "trifles" down to the argument that under the Soviet Constitution elections are "indirect," but he misses the substance of the thing. He fails to see the *class* nature of the state apparatus, of the machinery of state: Under bourgeois democracy the capitalists, by a thousand and one tricks—which are more artful and effective, the more "purely" democracy is developed—keep the masses away

from the work of administration and frustrate the freedom of the press, the right of assembly, etc. The Soviet government is the *first* in the world (or strictly speaking, the second, because the Paris Commune began to do the same thing) to *attract* the masses, precisely the *exploited* masses, to the work of administration. For the toiling masses, participation in bourgeois parliaments (which *never decide* the most important questions under bourgeois democracy, because they are decided by the Stock Exchange and the banks) is hindered by a thousand and one obstacles, and the workers know and feel, see and realise perfectly well that the bourgeois parliaments are alien institutions to them, are an *instrument for the oppression* of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, are an institution of the hostile class, of the exploiting minority.

The Soviets are the direct organisation of the toiling and exploited masses themselves, enabling them to organise and administer the state themselves in every possible way. And it is precisely the vanguard of the toiling and exploited, the urban proletariat that gains the advantage of this, because it is best organised by the large enterprises; it is much easier for it to elect and to watch elections. The Soviet organisation automatically *helps* unite all the toilers and exploited around their vanguard, the proletariat. The old bourgeois apparatus, the bureaucracy, the privileges of wealth, of bourgeois education, of social connections, etc., which are the more varied, the more highly bourgeois democracy is developed—all this disappears under the Soviet organisation. Freedom of the press ceases to be hypocrisy, because the printing presses and stocks of paper are taken away from the bourgeoisie. The same thing applies to the best buildings, the palaces, the mansions and manor houses. The Soviet government has taken thousands and thousands of these best buildings from the exploiters, and in this way it has made the right of assembly—without which democracy is a fraud—a million times more "democratic." The indirect elections to the non-local Soviets make it easier to hold Congresses of Soviets, it makes the *entire* apparatus less costly, more flexible, more accessible to the workers and peasants at a time when life is seething and it is necessary to be able quickly to recall a deputy or to elect him to the general Congress of Soviets.

Proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy; the Soviet government is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.

Only one who deliberately serves the bourgeoisie, or is politically quite dead, who does not see real life from behind the dusty pages of bourgeois books, who is thoroughly imbued with bourgeois democratic prejudices, and thereby, objectively, becomes the lackey of the bourgeoisie, could have failed to see this.

Only one who is incapable of *presenting the question* from the point of view of the *oppressed* classes could have failed to see this.

Is there a single country in the world, even among the most democratic bourgeois countries, in which the *average rank-and-file* worker, the average rank-and-file *village labourer*, or village semi-proletarian generally (*i.e.*, the representative of the oppressed masses, the overwhelming majority of the population), enjoys anything approaching such *liberty* to hold meetings in the best buildings, such *liberty* to use the best printing works and largest stocks of paper, to express his ideas and to protect his interests, such liberty to promote men and women of his own class to administer and to "run" the state as in Soviet Russia?

It is ridiculous to think that Mr. Kautsky could find in any country one well-informed worker or agricultural labourer out of a thousand who would have any doubts as to the reply to this question. Instinctively, from hearing fragments of admissions of the truth in the bourgeois press, the workers of the whole world sympathise with the Soviet Republic, precisely because they regard it as a proletarian democracy, *a democracy for the poor*, and not a democracy for the rich, as is really the case in every bourgeois democracy, even the best.

We are governed (and our state is "run") by bourgeois bureaucrats, by bourgeois members of parliament, by bourgeois judges—such is the simple indisputable and obvious truth, which tens and hundreds of millions of the exploited classes in all bourgeois countries, including the most democratic, know from their living experience, feel and realise every day.

In Russia the bureaucratic apparatus has been completely smashed up, not a stone of it has been left unturned; the old judges have all been expelled, the bourgeois parliament has been dispersed—and *far more accessible* representation has been given to the workers and peasants; *their* Soviets have replaced the bureaucrats, or *their* Soviets now control the bureaucrats, and *their* Soviets now elect the judges. This fact alone is enough to cause all the oppressed classes to recognise the Soviet government, *i.e.*, the present form of the dictatorship

of the proletariat, as being a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.

Kautsky does not understand this truth, which is so obvious and intelligible to every worker, because he "forgot," "unlearned" to put the question: Democracy *for what class?* He argues from the point of view of "pure" (*i.e.*, non-class? or above-class?) democracy. He argues like Shylock: "I want my pound of flesh and nothing less." Equality for all citizens—otherwise it is not democracy.

We must ask the learned "Marxist" and "socialist" Kautsky:

Can there be equality between the exploited and the exploiters?

It is monstrous, it is incredible, that one should have to put such a question in discussing a book written by the ideological leader of the Second International. But "having undertaken a task stick to it to the end." Since I have undertaken to write about Kautsky, I must explain to the learned man why there can be no equality between the exploiters and the exploited.

CAN THERE BE EQUALITY BETWEEN THE EXPLOITED AND THE EXPLOITERS?

KAUTSKY says:

> The exploiters always represented only a small minority of the population. (P. 14 of Kautsky's pamphlet.)

This is certainly true. Taking this as the starting point, what should be the argument? One may argue in a Marxian, in a socialist way, taking as a basis the relation between the exploited and the exploiter; or one may argue in a liberal, in a bourgeois-democratic way, taking as a basis the relation between the majority and the minority.

If we argue in a Marxian way we must say: The exploiters inevitably transform the state (we are speaking of democracy, *i.e.*, one of the forms of the state) into an instrument for the domination of their class, of the exploiters, over the exploited. Hence, so long as there are exploiters who rule the majority, the exploited, the democratic state must inevitably be democracy for the exploiters. The state of the exploited must fundamentally differ from such a state; it must be democracy for the exploited, and a means of suppressing the exploiters; and the suppression of a class means inequality for this class, its exclusion from "democracy."

If we argue in a liberal way, we must say: The majority decides, the minority submits. Those who do not submit are punished. That is all. Nothing need be said about the class character of the state in general, or about "pure democracy" in particular, because it is irrelevant; for a majority is a majority and a minority is a minority. A pound of flesh is a pound of flesh; and that is all there is to it.

And this is exactly the way Kautsky argues. He says:

> Why should the rule of the proletariat assume, and necessarily assume, a form which is incompatible with democracy? (P. 21.)

Then follows a very lengthy and a very verbose explanation, backed by a quotation from Marx and the figures of the elections to the Paris Commune, to the effect that the proletariat is in a majority. The conclusion is:

> A régime which is so strongly rooted in the masses has not the slightest reason for infringing upon democracy. It cannot always dispense with violence in cases when violence is employed to suppress democracy. Violence can only be met with violence. But a régime which knows that it has the support of the masses will employ violence only in order to *protect* democracy and not to *destroy* it. It would be simply committing suicide if it attempted to destroy its own most reliable basis—universal suffrage, that deep source of mighty moral authority. (P. 22.)

You see therefore, that the relation between the exploited and the exploiters has entirely vanished in Kautsky's argument, and all that remains is majority in general, minority in general, democracy in general, the "pure democracy" with which we are already familiar.

And all this, mark you, is said *à propos the Paris Commune!* We will quote Marx and Engels, by way of illustration, to show how they discuss the subject of dictatorship, *à propos the Paris Commune:*

> MARX: When the workers substitute their revolutionary dictatorship for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie . . . in order to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie . . . the workers invest the state with a revolutionary and transitional form. . . .

> ENGELS: The party [which has triumphed in the revolution] is necessarily compelled to maintain its rule by means of that fear which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. If the Paris Commune had not employed the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie, would it have maintained itself more than twenty-four hours? Are we not, on the contrary, justified in blaming the Commune for having employed this authority too little?

> ENGELS: As the state is only a transitional phenomenon which must be made use of in struggle, in the revolution, in order forcibly to crush our antagonists,

it is pure absurdity to speak of a people's free state. As long as the proletariat still *needs* the state, it needs it, not in the interests of freedom, but for the purpose of crushing its antagonists; and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom, then the state, as such, ceases to exist.

Kautsky is as far removed from Marx and Engels as heaven is from earth, as far as a liberal is removed from the proletarian revolutionary. The pure democracy, and simply, "democracy," that Kautsky talks about is merely a paraphrase of the people's "free state," *i.e.*, pure nonsense. Kautsky, with the learned air of a most learned armchair fool, or with the innocent air of a ten-year-old girl, asks: Why do we need a dictatorship when we have a majority? And Marx and Engels explain:

In order to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie;

In order to inspire the reactionaries with fear;

In order to maintain the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie;

In order that the proletariat may forcibly suppress its enemies!

But Kautsky does not understand these explanations. Infatuated with the "purity" of democracy, failing to perceive its bourgeois character, he "consistently" urges that the majority, since it is the majority, need not "break down the resistance" of the minority, need not "forcibly suppress" it—it is sufficient to suppress *cases* of infringement of democracy. Infatuated with the "purity" of democracy, Kautsky *unwittingly* commits the very little error that all bourgeois democrats always commit, namely, he takes formal equality (which is only a fraud and hypocrisy under capitalism) as *de facto* equality. Quite a bagatelle!

The exploiter and the exploited cannot be equal.

This truth, however unpleasant it may be to Kautsky, is nevertheless the quintessence of socialism.

Another truth: there can be no real equality until all possibility of the exploitation of one class by another has been destroyed.

The exploiters can be defeated at one stroke in the event of a successful insurrection at the centre, or of a mutiny in the army; but except in very rare and particular cases, the exploiters cannot be destroyed at one stroke. It is impossible to expropriate all the landlords and capitalists of a large country at one stroke. Furthermore, expropriation alone, as a legal or political act, does not settle the matter by a long way, because it is necessary in practice to *remove* the landlords and capitalists, in practice to replace their

management of the factories and estates by working class management. There can be no equality between the exploiters,—who for many generations have enjoyed education and the advantages and habits of wealth—and the exploited, the majority of whom even in the most advanced and most democratic bourgeois republics are cowed, backward, ignorant, frightened, unorganised. For a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably continue to enjoy a large number of great practical advantages: they still have money (since it is impossible to abolish money all at once), some moveable property—often fairly considerable—social connections, habits of organisation and management, knowledge of all the "secrets" (customs, methods, means and possibilities) of management, higher education, close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think in the bourgeois manner), incomparably greater experience in military affairs (this is very important), and so forth, and so forth.

If the exploiters are defeated in one country only—and this, of course, is typical, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception—they *still* remain *stronger* than the exploited, because the international connections of the exploiters are enormous. The fact that a section of the exploited, or of the least intelligent section of the middle peasant, artisan and similar masses may and indeed do follow the exploiters, has been proved hitherto by *all* revolutions, including the Commune (for there were also proletarians among the Versailles troops, which the most learned Kautsky seems to have "forgotten").

In these circumstances to assume that in a revolution that is at all profound and serious the issue is decided simply by the relation between the majority and the minority, is the acme of stupidity, the stupid prejudice of a common liberal, is the *deception of the masses,* concealing from them a well-established historical truth. This historical truth is that in every profound revolution, the *prolonged, stubborn, desperate* resistance of the exploiters, who for a number of years enjoy important practical advantages over the exploited, is the *rule.* Never, except in the sentimental fantasies of the sentimental simpleton Kautsky, will the exploiters submit to the decision of the exploited majority without making use of their advantages in a last desperate battle, or in a series of battles.

The transition from capitalism to communism represents an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch has terminated, the exploiters

will inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* will be converted into *attempts* at restoration. And after their first serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters—who had not expected their overthrow, who never believed it possible, who would not permit the thought of it—will throw themselves with tenfold energy, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of their lost "paradise," for their families who had been leading such a sweet and easy life and whom now the "common herd" is condemning to ruin and destitution (or to "common" work). . . . In the wake of the capitalist exploiters will be found the broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie, to whose vacillation and hesitation the historical experience of every country for decades bears witness one day they march behind the proletariat, the next day they will take fright at the difficulties of the revolution, become panic-stricken at the first defeat or semi-defeat of the workers; they become irritable, they run about, snivel and rush from one camp to the other—just like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries!

And in these circumstances, in the epoch of desperate, acute war, when history is placing the question of the life and death of age-long privilege on the order of the day—at such a time to talk about majority and minority, about pure democracy, about dictatorship being unnecessary, and about equality between the exploiter and the exploited! What bottomless stupidity and philistinism are needed for this!

But during the decades of comparatively "peaceful" capitalism, between 1871 and 1914, whole Augean stables of philistinism, imbecility, and renegacy accumulated in the socialist parties which tried to adapt themselves to opportunism.

The reader will probably have noticed that Kautsky, in the above-quoted passage from his pamphlet, speaks of an attempt to encroach upon universal suffrage (extolling it, by the way, as a deep source of mighty moral authority, whereas Engels, who *à propos* the same Paris Commune and the same question of dictatorship, spoke of the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie—a very characteristic difference between the philistine's and the revolutionary's view of "authority")

It should be observed that the question of depriving the exploiters of the franchise is *purely a Russian question,* and not a question of the dictatorship of the proletariat in general. Had Kautsky, casting

aside hypocrisy, entitled his pamphlet: "Against the Bolsheviks," the title would have corresponded to the contents of the pamphlet, and Kautsky would have been justified in speaking directly about the franchise. But Kautsky wanted to write primarily as a "theoretician." He called his pamphlet *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*—in general. He deals particularly with the Soviets and Russia only in the second part of the pamphlet, beginning with Part 5. The subject dealt with in the first part, from which I quoted, is *democracy* and *dictatorship in general.* In speaking about the franchise, Kautsky betrayed himself as an opponent of the Bolsheviks *who does not care a brass farthing for theory;* for theory, *i.e.,* the discussion of the general (and not the national and particular) class basis of democracy and dictatorship, ought to deal, not with a special question such as the franchise, but with the general question as to whether democracy can be *preserved for the rich and the exploiters* in the historical period of the overthrow of the exploiters and the substitution of the state of the exploited for the *exploiters'* state.

This is the only form in which a theoretician can present the question.

We know the example of the Paris Commune, we know all that was said by the founders of Marxism in connection with it. On the basis of this material I examined, for example, the question of democracy and dictatorship in my book, *State and Revolution,* which I wrote before the October Revolution. I did not say anything at all about restricting the franchise. And now it must be said that the question of restricting the franchise is a specifically national question, and not a general question of the dictatorship. One must study the question of restricting the franchise in the light of the *specific conditions* of the Russian revolution and of the *specific path* of its development. This will be done later on in this pamphlet. It would be a mistake, however, to guarantee in advance that the impending proletarian revolutions in Europe will all, or for the most part, be necessarily accompanied by the restriction of the franchise for the bourgeoisie. Perhaps they will. After our experience of the war and of the Russian Revolution we can say that it will probably be so; but it is not *absolutely necessary* for the purpose of realising the dictatorship, it is not a *necessary* symptom of the logical concept, dictatorship, it does not enter as a *necessary* condition in the historical and class concept, dictatorship.

The necessary symptom, the necessary condition of dictatorship, is the *forcible* suppression of the exploiters as a class, and, consequently, the *infringement* of "pure democracy," *i.e.*, of equality and freedom *for that class.*

Only in this way can the question be put theoretically. And by failing to put the question in this manner, Kautsky showed that he opposes the Bolsheviks, not as a theoretician, but as a sycophant of the opportunists and of the bourgeoisie.

In which countries and under what national peculiarities of this or that capitalism will democracy for the exploiters be infringed upon or restricted (wholly or in part)? This is a question of the national peculiarities of this or that capitalism, of this or that revolution. The theoretical question is an entirely different one, *viz.*, is the dictatorship of the proletariat possible *without infringing upon democracy* for the *exploiting* class?

It is precisely this question, the *only* theoretically important and essential one, that Kautsky evaded. He quoted all sorts of passages from Marx and Engels, *except those* relating to this question, and which I quoted above.

Kautsky talked about everything, about everything that is acceptable to liberals and bourgeois democrats, and does not go beyond their system of ideas, but he did not talk about the main thing, namely, that the proletariat cannot achieve victory *without breaking the resistance* of the bourgeoisie, *without forcibly suppressing its enemies,* and that, where there is "forcible suppressing," where there is no "freedom," *there, of course, is no democracy.*

This Kautsky did not understand.

We shall now pass to the consideration of the experience of the Russian Revolution and of that divergence between the Soviets and the Constituent Assembly which led to the dissolution of the latter and to the withdrawal of the franchise from the bourgeoisie.

THE SOVIETS DARE NOT BECOME STATE ORGANISATIONS

The Soviets are the Russian form of the proletarian dictatorship. If a Marxian theoretician, writing on the dictatorship of the proletariat, had seriously set to work to study the subject (and not merely to repeat the petty-bourgeois lamentations over dictatorship, as Kautsky does in repeating the Menshevik melodies) he would first

of all have given a general definition of dictatorship, and would then have examined its peculiar national form, the Soviets; he would have given his critique of them as one of the forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It goes without saying that nothing of the kind was to be expected from Kautsky after his liberal "interpretation" of Marx's theory of the dictatorship; but the manner in which he approached the question of what the Soviets are, and how he dealt with this question is highly characteristic.

The Soviets, he says, recalling their rise in 1905,[3] created:

> The most all-embracing (*umfassendste*) form of proletarian organisation, for it embraced all the wage workers. (P. 31.)

In 1905 they were only local bodies; in 1917 they became national organisations.

Kautsky continues:

> The Soviet organisation has already behind it a great and glorious history, and it has a still more mighty future before it, and not in Russia alone. It appears that everywhere, the old methods of the economic and political struggle of the proletariat fail against the gigantic economic and political forces which finance capital has at its disposal. These old methods cannot be discarded; they are still indispensable for normal times; but from time to time tasks arise which they cannot fulfil, tasks that can be successfully fulfilled only by a combination of all the political and economic instruments of force of the working class. (P. 32.)

Then follows a disquisition on the mass strike and on the "trade union bureaucracy"—which is equally as necessary as the trade unions—being

> useless for the purpose of directing the mighty class battles that are more and more becoming the sign of the times. . . .
>
> Thus—Kautsky concludes—the Soviet organisation is one of the most important phenomena of our time. It promises to acquire decisive importance in the great decisive battles between capital and labour towards which we are marching.
>
> But are we justified in demanding more of the Soviets? After the November (October) Revolution the Bolsheviks, in conjunction with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, secured a majority in the Russian Soviets of Workers' Deputies, and after the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly they set out to transform the Soviets from a *militant organisation* of one *class* into a *state organisation*. They destroyed the democracy which the Russian people had won in the March (February) Revolution. Accordingly, the Bolsheviks have ceased to call themselves *Social-Democrats*. They call themselves *Communists*. (P. 33, Kautsky's italics.)

Those who are familiar with Russian Menshevik literature will at once see with what servile fidelity Kautsky copies Martov, Axelrod, Stein and Co. Yes, "servile fidelity," because Kautsky distorts the facts to a ridiculous degree in order to pander to Menshevik prejudices. Kautsky did not take the trouble, for instance, to ask his informants (Stein of Berlin, or Axelrod of Stockholm) *when* the questions of changing the name of the Bolsheviks to Communists and when the importance of the Soviets as state organisations were first raised. Had Kautsky made this simple enquiry he would not have penned these ridiculous lines, for both these questions were raised by the Bolsheviks in April 1917, for example, in my *Theses* of April 17 (4) 1917 * *i.e., long before* the October Revolution of 1917 (and, of course, long before the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on January 18 [5], 1918).

But the passages from Kautsky's argument which I have just quoted in full represent the *crux* of the whole question about the Soviets. This crux is the question: should the Soviets aspire to become state organisations (in April, 1917, the Bolsheviks put forward the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets," ** and at the Party Conference held in the same month they declared that they were not satisfied with a bourgeois parliamentary republic, but demanded a workers' and peasants' republic of the Paris Commune type, or Soviet type ***), *or,* should the Soviets not strive for this, should they refrain from taking political power in their hands, refrain from becoming state organisations and remain the "militant organisations of one class" (as Martov expressed it, plausibly concealing under this innocent desire the fact that under Menshevik leadership the Soviets were instruments *for the subjection of the workers to the bourgeoisie)?*

Kautsky slavishly repeats Martov's words, takes up *fragments* of the theoretical controversy between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and uncritically and senselessly transplants them to the general theoretical and European field. The result is such a muddle

* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. XX, Book I, pp. 106-110; also Little Lenin Library, Vol. 9, pp. 32-36.—*Ed.*

** See articles: "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution" and "On Dual Power" in *Collected Works,* Vol. XX, Book I; also Little Lenin Library, Vol. 9.—*Ed.*

*** See "Report on the Political Situation" at the All-Russian April Conference of the R.S.-D.L.P., May 7 (April 24), 1917, in *Collected Works,* Vol. XX, Book I; also Little Lenin Library, Vol. 10.—*Ed.*

as to provoke Homeric laughter in every class-conscious Russian worker who hears of these arguments of Kautsky.

And when we explain what the question at issue is every worker in Europe (except a handful of inveterate social-imperialists) will greet Kautsky with the same outburst of laughter.

Kautsky has rendered Martov a backhanded service by reducing his mistake to obvious absurdity. Let us see what Kautsky's argument amounts to.

The Soviets embrace all wage workers. The old methods of the economic and political struggle of the proletariat are inadequate against finance capital. The Soviets have a great rôle to play in the future, and not only in Russia. They will play a decisive rôle in the great decisive battles between capital and labour in Europe. This is what Kautsky says.

Excellent. But will not the "decisive battles between capital and labour" decide the question as to which of the two classes will possess political power?

Nothing of the kind, God forbid!

Organisations which embrace all the wage workers *must not become state organisations* in the "decisive" battles.

But what is the state?

The state is nothing but a machine for the suppression of one class by another.

Thus, the oppressed class, the vanguard of all the toilers and of the exploited in modern society, must strive towards the "decisive battles between capital and labour," but *must not touch* the machine by means of which capital oppresses labour! It *must not break up* that machine! It must not make use of its all-embracing organisation for the purpose of *suppressing the exploiters!*

Excellent, magnificent, Mr. Kautsky! "We" recognise the class war, in the same way as all liberals recognise it, *i.e.*, without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie!

This is where Kautsky's complete rupture with Marxism and with socialism becomes obvious. Practically, it is desertion to the camp of the bourgeoisie which is prepared to concede to everything except the transformation of the organisations of the class which it oppresses into state organisations. Kautsky can no longer save his position of trying to reconcile everything and to avoid all profound contradiction by means of phrases.

Kautsky either rejects the transfer of political power to the work-

ing class; or he concedes that the working class may take over the old bourgeois state machine, but does not concede that it must break up, smash that machine and replace it by a new, proletarian one. Whichever way Kautsky's arguments are "interpreted" or "explained," his break with Marxism and his desertion to the bourgeoisie are obvious.

Already in the *Communist Manifesto*, in describing what sort of state the victorious working class needs, Marx wrote: "A state, that is, the proletariat organised as the ruling class."

Now a man who claims that he is still a Marxist comes on the scene and declares that the proletariat, organised to a man and waging the "decisive battle" against capital, *must not* transform its class organisation into a state organisation! Here Kautsky has betrayed that "superstitious faith in the state" which, in Germany, as Engels wrote as far back as 1891, "had permeated the minds of the bourgeoisie, and even of many workers." Workers fight! Our philistine "agrees" to this (as every bourgeois "agrees," since the workers are fighting all the same and the only thing that worries him is finding the means to blunt the edge of their sword). Fight, but *don't dare to win!* Don't destroy the state machine of the bourgeoisie; don't put proletarian "state organisation" in the place of the bourgeois "state organisation"!

Whoever sincerely shares the Marxian view that the state is nothing but a machine for the suppression of one class by another, and who has at all reflected upon this truth, could never have reached the absurd conclusion that the proletarian organisations capable of defeating finance capital must not become transformed into state organisations. It was this point that betrayed the petty bourgeois who believed that "after all is said and done" the state is something that is outside of class, or stands above class. Why, indeed, should the proletariat, "*one class,*" be permitted to wage determined war against *capital*, which rules not only over the proletariat, but over the whole people, over the whole of the petty bourgeoisie, over the whole of the peasantry, but why should this proletariat, this "*one class*" not be permitted to transform its organisation into a state organisation? Because the petty bourgeois is *afraid* of the class struggle, and does not carry it to its logical conclusion, to its *main* object.

Kautsky has got himself completely mixed up and has given himself away entirely. Mark you, he himself admits that Europe is

marching towards decisive struggles between capital and labour, and that the old methods of the economic and political struggle of the proletariat are inadequate. But these old methods were precisely the utilisation of *bourgeois* democracy. Hence? . . .

But Kautsky feared to draw the logical conclusion from this.

Hence, only a reactionary, only an enemy of the working class, only a henchman of the bourgeoisie, can at the present time turn his face to the obsolete past, depict the charms of bourgeois democracy and babble about pure democracy. Bourgeois democracy *was* progressive compared with the Middle Ages, and it was necessary to utilise it. But now it is *inadequate* for the working class. Now we must look, not backward, but forward, to substituting *proletarian* democracy for bourgeois democracy. And although the preparatory work for the proletarian revolution, the formation and the training of the proletarian army, was possible (and necessary) within the framework of the bourgeois democratic state, now that we have reached the stage of "decisive battles," to confine the proletariat to this framework means betraying the cause of the proletariat, means being a renegade.

Kautsky has made himself particularly ridiculous by repeating Martov's argument *without* noticing that Martov's argument was based on *another* argument which he, Kautsky, does not use! Martov said (and Kautsky repeats it) that Russia was not yet ripe for socialism. From this it logically followed that it was too early to transform the Soviets from organs of struggle into state organisations (read: it is quite time to transform the Soviets, with the assistance of Menshevik leaders, into instruments for subjecting the workers to the imperialist bourgeoisie). Kautsky, however, *cannot* say openly that Europe is not ripe for socialism. In 1909, when he was not yet a renegade, he wrote that there was no reason to fear a *premature* revolution, that whoever renounced revolution for fear of defeat would be a traitor. Kautsky dares not *openly* renounce this. And so we get the absurdity, which utterly betrays the stupidity and cowardice of the petty bourgeois: on the one hand, Europe is ripe for socialism and is marching towards decisive battles between capital and labour; on the other hand, the *fighting organisation* (*i.e.*, which is formed, grows up and becomes strong in battle), the organisation of the proletariat, of the vanguard, of the organiser and the leader of the oppressed, *must not* be transformed into a state organisation!

From the point of view of practical politics the idea that Soviets are necessary as fighting organisations but must not be transformed into state organisations is infinitely more absurd than from the theoretical point of view. Even in peace time, when there is no revolutionary situation, the mass struggle of the workers against the capitalists—for instance, a mass strike—causes great bitterness on both sides, gives rise to fierce passions in the struggle, to the bourgeoisie insisting on remaining "master in its own house," etc. But in the time of revolution, when political life reaches the boiling point, an organisation like the Soviets, which embraces *all* workers, *all* industries, *all* the soldiers, and *all* the toiling and poorest section of the rural population—such an organisation in the course of the struggle, by the simple logic of attack and defence, automatically has to raise the question of power *point blank*. The attempt to take up a middle position and to "reconcile" the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is sheer stupidity and is doomed to miserable failure. This is what happened in Russia to the preachings of Martov and other Mensheviks and this will inevitably happen in Germany and other countries if the Soviets succeed in developing on a fairly wide scale, manage to unite and become consolidated. To tell the Soviets: Fight, but do not take political power entirely in your hands, do not become state organisations, is tantamount to preaching the cooperation of classes and "social peace" between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It is ridiculous to think that such a position in the midst of fierce struggle could lead to anything else than disgraceful failure. But it is the everlasting fate of Kautsky to sit between two stools. He pretends that he does not agree with the opportunists on anything in theory, but in *practice* he agrees with them on everything that is essential, *i.e.*, on everything that pertains to revolution.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THE SOVIET REPUBLIC

THE question of the Constituent Assembly and its dispersal by the Bolsheviks is the crux of Kautsky's entire pamphlet. He constantly reverts to it, and the whole of this literary production of the theoretical leader of the Second International teems with innuendoes as to how the Bolsheviks had "destroyed democracy" (see one of the quotations from Kautsky above). The question is really

an interesting and important one, because the relation between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy is confronting the revolution in a practical form. Let us see how our "Marxist theoretician" has dealt with the question.

He quotes my "Theses on the Constituent Assembly," which were published in the *Pravda* of January 8, 1918 * (December 26, 1917). One would think that no better evidence of Kautsky's serious approach to the subject and of his willingness to study the documents could be desired. But observe *how* he quotes. He does not say that there were nineteen of these theses; he does not say that they dealt with the question of the relation between the ordinary bourgeois republic, with a Constituent Assembly and a Soviet republic, *as well as* with the *history* of the divergence, in the course of our revolution, between the Constituent Assembly and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky suppresses all that, and simply tells the reader that "two of these [theses] are particularly important;" one, that a split occurred among the Socialist-Revolutionaries after the elections to the Constituent Assembly, but before it was convened, (Kautsky does not mention that this was the fifth thesis), and the other, that the republic of the Soviets is in general a higher democratic form than the Constituent Assembly (Kautsky does not mention that this was the third thesis).

From this third thesis Kautsky quotes in full only the following part:

> . . . A republic of Soviets . . . is not only the form of a higher type of democratic institution (as compared with the *ordinary* bourgeois republic crowned with a Constituent Assembly) but it is also the only form capable of securing the most painless transition ** to socialism [Kautsky omits the word "ordinary" and the introductory words of the thesis: "for the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist order, for the dictatorship of the proletariat"].

After quoting these words, Kautsky, with magnificent irony, exclaims

* See Appendix I in this pamphlet.—*Ed.*

** Incidentally, Kautsky, with an obvious attempt at sarcasm, repeatedly quotes the expression, "most painless" transition; but as the shaft misses its mark, he, a few pages further on, commits a slight forgery and falsely quotes it as "painless transition." Of course, by such means it is easy to put any absurdity into the mouth of an opponent. The forgery also facilitates the evasion of the *substance* of the argument, namely, that the most painless transition to socialism is possible only when all the poor are organised (Soviets) and when the central state power (of the proletariat) helps to organise it.

It is a pity that this conclusion was arrived at only after the Bolsheviks found themselves in a minority in the Constituent Assembly. Before that no one had called for it more strenuously than Lenin.

This is literally what Kautsky says on page 31 of his book!

It is positively a gem! Only a sycophant of the bourgeoisie could present the question so falsely as to give the reader the impression that all the Bolsheviks' talk about a higher type of state was an invention which saw the light of day *after* they found themselves in the minority in the Constituent Assembly. Such an infamous lie could only have been uttered by a scoundrel who has sold himself to the bourgeoisie, or what is absolutely the same thing, who has placed his trust in P. Axelrod, and is concealing the source of his information.

Every one knows that the very day of my arrival in Russia, on April 17 (4), 1917, I publicly read my theses in which I proclaimed the superiority of the Paris Commune type of state over the bourgeois parliamentary republic. Afterwards, I repeatedly stated this in print, as, for instance, in a pamphlet on political parties, which was translated into English and was published in January 1918 in *The* (New York) *Evening Post.** Moreover, the conference of the Bolshevik Party, held in the beginning of May (end of April) 1917, adopted a resolution to the effect that a proletarian and peasant republic was higher than a bourgeois parliamentary republic, that our Party would not be satisfied with the latter, and that the programme of the Party ought to be amended accordingly.

In face of these facts, what name can be given to Kautsky's trick of assuring his German readers that I had been strenuously demanding the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and that I began to "belittle" the honour and dignity of the Constituent Assembly after the Bolsheviks found themselves in the minority in it? How can one excuse such a trick? ** By pleading that Kautsky did not know the facts? If that is the case, why did he undertake to write about the subject? Or why did he not honestly declare that he was writing on the strength of information supplied by the Mensheviks, by Stein, P. Axelrod, and Co.? By pretending to be objective,

* Published in issue of January 15, 1918, under title "Lenin on Political Parties in Russia." See V. I. Lenin, "Political Parties in Russia and the Tasks of the Proletariat," *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, pp. 158-167.—*Ed,*

** Incidentally, there are many Menshevik lies of this kind in Kautsky's pamphlet. It is a lampoon written by a disgruntled Menshevik.

Kautsky wants to conceal his rôle as the servant of the Mensheviks who are disgruntled because they have been defeated.

But these are only the blossoms, the fruit is yet to come.

Let us assume that Kautsky would not or could not (??) obtain from his informants a translation of the Bolshevik resolutions and declarations on the question as to whether they would be satisfied with a bourgeois parliamentary democratic republic or not. Let us assume this, although it is incredible. But Kautsky *directly* mentions my theses of January 8, 1918 (December 26, 1917) on page 30 of his book.

Does he know these theses in full, or does he know only those parts that have been translated for him by Stein, Axelrod and Co.? Kautsky quotes my *third* thesis on the *fundamental* question as to whether the Bolsheviks, before the elections to the Constituent Assembly, regarded the Soviet republic as a higher type of republic than the bourgeois republic, and whether they told the people that. *But he does not quote the second thesis.* The second thesis reads as follows:

> While demanding the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social-Democracy has, from the very beginning of the Revolution of 1917, *repeatedly emphasised that a republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the ordinary bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly.* (My italics.)

In order to represent the Bolsheviks as being bereft of all principles, as "revolutionary opportunists" (this is a term which Kautsky employs somewhere in his book in some connection which I do not remember), Mr. Kautsky *has concealed from his German readers* the fact that the theses contain a *direct* reference to "*repeated*" declarations!

Such are the petty, miserable and contemptible methods Mr. Kautsky employs! That is the way he avoided the theoretical question.

Is it true or not that the bourgeois democratic parliamentary republic is a *lower* form of republic than that of the Paris Commune or Soviet type? This is the crux of the question, and Kautsky evaded it. Kautsky has "forgotten" all that Marx said in his analysis of the Paris Commune. He has also "forgotten" Engels' letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875, in which Marx's idea is formulated in a

practical, terse, and clear fashion: "The Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word."

Here is the most prominent theoretician of the Second International, in a special pamphlet on the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, especially dealing with Russia, where the question of a state that was higher than a democratic bourgeois republic has been raised repeatedly in a direct manner, ignoring this very question. In what way does this differ in fact from desertion to the bourgeois camp?

(We will observe in parenthesis that in this respect also Kautsky is merely treading in the footsteps of the Russian Mensheviks. Among the latter there are any number of people who know "all the quotations" from Marx and Engels; but not a single Menshevik from April to October 1917 and from October 1917 to October 1918 has made a *single* attempt to study the question of the Paris Commune type of state. Plekhanov, too, has evaded the question. *He thought it wiser to remain silent.)*

It goes without saying that to discuss the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly with persons who call themselves socialists and Marxists, but who in practice desert to the bourgeoisie on the *main* question, on the question of the Paris Commune type of state, would be casting pearls before swine. It will be sufficient for me to give the complete text of my thesis on the Constituent Assembly as an appendix to the present book. The reader will then see that the question was presented on January 8, 1918 (December 26, 1917) theoretically, historically, and from the point of view of practical politics.

If Kautsky has completely renounced Marxism as a theoretician he might at least as a historian have examined the question of the struggle of the Soviets with the Constituent Assembly. We know from many of Kautsky's works that he *could* be a Marxian historian, and that *these* works of his will remain the permanent treasure of the proletariat in spite of his subsequent renegacy. But on this question Kautsky *turns away* from the truth even as a historian, he ignores *well-known* facts and behaves like a sycophant. He wants to represent the Bolsheviks as being without principles and he tells his readers that they tried to *allay* their conflict with the Constituent Assembly before dispersing it. We have done absolutely nothing to be ashamed of; we have nothing to recant. I give my theses in full, and there I say as clearly as clear can be: Gentle-

men of the vacillating petty bourgeoisie who have got into the Constituent Assembly, become reconciled to the proletarian dictatorship, or else we shall conquer you by "revolutionary means." (Theses 18 and 19.)

That is how a really revolutionary proletariat has behaved, and always will behave towards the vacillating petty bourgeoisie.

Kautsky adopts a formal standpoint on the question of the Constituent Assembly. In my theses I clearly and repeatedly say that the interests of the revolution are higher than the formal rights of the Constituent Assembly (theses 16 and 17). The formal democratic point of view is precisely the point of view of the *bourgeois* democrat who refuses to admit that the interests of the proletariat and of the proletarian class struggle are supreme. As a historian, Kautsky would not have been able to deny that bourgeois parliaments are the organs of this or that class; but now (in the interests of the dirty cause of renouncing revolution) Kautsky found it necessary to forget his Marxism, and he does not *put the question:* of *what class* was the Constituent Assembly of Russia the organ? Kautsky does not examine the concrete conditions; he does not want to face the facts; he does not say a single word to his German readers to suggest that my theses contained, not only a theoretical elucidation of the question of the limited character of bourgeois democracy (theses 1-3), not only an outline of the concrete conditions which determined the discrepancy between the party lists in the middle of October 1917 and the real state of affairs in December 1917 (theses 4-6), but also a history of the class struggle and the *civil war* in October-December, 1917 (theses 7-15). From this concrete history we drew the conclusion (thesis 14) that the slogan: "All power to the Constituent Assembly," had, in *reality*, become the watchword of the Cadets, the Kaledin-ists, and their abettors.

Kautsky, the historian, fails to see this. Kautsky, the historian, has never heard that universal suffrage sometimes gives rise to petty-bourgeois, sometimes to reactionary and sometimes to counter-revolutionary parliaments. Kautsky, the Marxian historian, has never heard that the method of elections and the form of democracy are one thing, and that the class content of the given institution is another thing. This question of the class content of the Constituent Assembly is directly put and answered in my theses. Perhaps my answer is wrong. Nothing would have been more welcome than a Marxian criticism of our analysis by an outsider. Instead of writing

silly phrases (there are plenty of such phrases in Kautsky's book) about somebody, somehow, preventing the criticism of Bolshevism, he ought to have set out to make such a criticism. But the point is that he has no criticism to offer. He does not even *raise the question* of the class analysis of the Soviets and of the Constituent Assembly. Hence it is *impossible* to argue, to debate with Kautsky; and all that we can do is to *prove* to the reader why Kautsky cannot be called by any other name than renegade.

The divergence between the Soviets and the Constituent Assembly has its history, which even a historian who does not adopt the point of view of class war could not ignore. Kautsky would not even *touch upon* this factual history. Kautsky has concealed from his German readers the universally known fact (which only malicious Mensheviks now suppress) that the divergence between the Soviets and the "state" (that is, the bourgeois state) institutions existed even when the Mensheviks predominated, from March to November, 1917. Actually, Kautsky adopts the position of an advocate of conciliation, compromise and collaboration between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. However much Kautsky may deny this, it is a fact, which is borne out by his whole pamphlet. To say that the Constituent Assembly should not have been dispersed is tantamount to saying that the fight against the bourgeoisie should not have been fought to a finish, that it should not have been overthrown and that the proletariat should have become reconciled with the bourgeoisie.

Why has Kautsky said nothing about the fact that the Mensheviks engaged in this inglorious work between March and November, 1917 and did not achieve anything? If it were possible to reconcile the bourgeoisie with the proletariat why did not the Mensheviks succeed in doing so? Why did the bourgeoisie stand aloof from the Soviets? Why did the *Mensheviks* call the Soviets "Revolutionary Democracy," and the bourgeoisie the "property qualification elements"?

Kautsky concealed from his German readers that it was precisely the Mensheviks who, in the "epoch" of their predominance (February to October 1917), called the Soviets "Revolutionary Democracy," thereby admitting the superiority of the Soviets over all other institutions. It is only by concealing this fact that the historian Kautsky was able to make it appear that the divergence between the Soviets and the bourgeoisie had no history, that it arose instantaneously, suddenly, without cause, because of the bad behaviour

of the Bolsheviks. As a matter of fact, it was precisely *the more than six months'* (an enormous period in time of revolution) *experience* of the Menshevik policy of compromise, of attempts to reconcile the proletariat with the bourgeoisie that convinced the people of the fruitlessness of these attempts and drove the proletariat away from the Mensheviks.

Kautsky admits that the Soviets are an excellent fighting organisation of the proletariat, and that they have a great future before them. But that being the case, Kautsky's position collapses like a house of cards, or like the dreams of a petty-bourgeois who believes that the acute struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be avoided. For revolution is a continuous desperate struggle, and the proletariat is the vanguard class of *all* the oppressed, the focus and centre of all the aspirations of all the oppressed who are striving for emancipation! Naturally, therefore, the Soviets, as the organ of struggle of the oppressed masses, reflected and expressed the moods and changes of opinions of these masses ever so much more quickly, more fully, and more faithfully, than any other institution (that, incidentally, is one of the reasons why Soviet democracy is the highest type of democracy).

In the period between March 13 (February 28) and November 7 (October 25), 1917, the Soviets managed to convene *two* All-Russian Congresses of representatives of the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia, of all the workers and soldiers, and 70 or 80 per cent of all the peasantry; not to speak of the vast number of local, district, urban, provincial, and regional congresses. During this period, the bourgeosie did not succeed in convening a single institution that represented the majority of the people (except that obvious sham and mockery called the "Democratic Conference,"[4] which enraged the proletariat). The Constituent Assembly reflected the *same* mood of the masses and the *same* political groups as was reflected by the first (June) All-Russian Congress of Soviets. At the time the Constituent Assembly was convened (January 1918), the Second and Third Congresses of Soviets met (in November [October] 1917, and January 1918 respectively) and both *demonstrated as clearly as clear can be* that the masses had swung to the Left, had become revolutionised, had turned away from the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and had passed over to the side of the Bolsheviks; that is, had turned away from petty-bourgeois leadership, from the illusion that it was possible to reach

a compromise with the bourgeoisie, and joined the proletarian revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

Hence, even the *external history* of the Soviets shows that the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly was inevitable and that it was a reactionary body.

But Kautsky sticks firmly to his motto: Let "pure democracy" prevail though the revolution perish and the bourgeoisie triumph over the proletariat! *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus!* *

The following figures depict the composition of the All-Russian Congresses of Soviets in the course of the history of the Russian revolution:

All-Russian Congresses of Soviets	*Number of Delegates*	*Number of Bolsheviks*	*Per cent Bolsheviks*
1st—June 16, 1917	790	103	13
2nd—November 7, 1917	675	343	51
3rd—January 23, 1918	710	434	61
4th—March 14, 1918	1,232	795	64
5th—July 4, 1918	1,164	773	66

It is enough to glance at these figures to understand why the defence of the Constituent Assembly and talk (like Kautsky's) about the Bolsheviks' not having a majority of the population behind them is ridiculed in Russia.

THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION

As I have already pointed out, the disfranchisement of the bourgeoisie is not necessarily an element of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And in Russia, the Bolsheviks, who long before November (October) advanced the slogan of proletarian dictatorship, did not say anything in advance about disfranchising the exploiters. *This* element of the dictatorship did not make its appearance "according to the plan" of any particular party; it emerged of its own accord in the course of the struggle. Of course, Kautsky the historian failed to observe this. He failed to understand that even when the Mensheviks, the advocates of compromise with the bourgeoisie, predominated in the Soviets, the bourgeoisie of its own accord separated itself from the Soviets, boycotted them, put itself up in opposition to them and intrigued against them. The Soviets

* Let justice be done though the world perish.—*Ed.*

arose without any constitution, and existed for *more than twelve months* (from the spring of 1917 to the summer of 1918) without any constitution. The rage of the bourgeoisie against these independent and omnipotent (because all-embracing) organisations of the oppressed, the unscrupulous, self-seeking and despicable fight the bourgeoisie waged against the Soviets, and lastly, the overt participation of the bourgeoisie—from the Cadets to the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, from Milyukov to Kerensky—in the Kornilov mutiny, all *paved the way* for the formal exclusion of the bourgeoisie from the Soviets.

Kautsky has heard about this Kornilov mutiny, but he majestically scorns historical facts and the course and forms of the struggle which determined the *forms* of the dictatorship. Indeed, what have facts to do with "pure democracy"? That is why Kautsky's "criticism" of the disfranchisement of the bourgeoisie is so sweetly naive, which would be touching in a child, but which is repulsive in a person who has not yet been officially certified as being feeble-minded.

> If they (the capitalists) find themselves in an insignificant minority, under universal suffrage they will more readily become reconciled to their fate. (P. 33.)

Charming, is it not? Clever Kautsky has seen many cases in history, and, of course, knows perfectly well from his observations of life, that there are landlords and capitalists who give consideration to the will of the majority of the oppressed. Clever Kautsky firmly adopts the point of view of an "opposition," *i.e.*, the point of view of the parliamentary struggle. This is literally what he says: "opposition" (p. 34 and elsewhere).

Oh, learned historian and politician! It would not be amiss for you to know that "opposition" is a concept that belongs to the peaceful, and only to the parliamentary struggle, *i.e.*, a concept that corresponds to a non-revolutionary situation, a concept that corresponds to a situation marked by an *absence of revolution.* During revolution we have to deal with a ruthless enemy in civil war; and no reactionary jeremiads of a petty-bourgeois who fears such a war as Kautsky does will alter the fact. To regard the problems of ruthless civil war, when the bourgeoisie is prepared to commit any crime—the example of the Versaillese and their deals with Bismarck [5] must mean something to every person who does not treat

history in the way it was treated by Gogol's Petrushka *—when the bourgeoisie summons foreign states to its assistance and intrigues with them against the revolution—to regard these problems in this way is simply comical. Like the "muddleheaded councillor" Kautsky, the revolutionary proletariat should put on a nightcap and regard the bourgeoisie, which is organising Dutov, Krasnov and Czecho-Slovak counter-revolutionary insurrections[6] and which is spending millions to subsidise saboteurs, as a legal "opposition." Oh, what profundity!

Kautsky is interested only in the formal, legal aspect of the question, and his disquisitions on the Soviet constitution involuntarily recall Bebel's words: "Lawyers are thorough reactionaries."

> In reality the capitalists alone cannot be disfranchised. What is a capitalist in the legal sense of the term? A property owner? Even in a country which has advanced so far along the path of economic progress as Germany, where the proletariat is so numerous, the establishment of a Soviet republic would disfranchise large masses of the people. In 1907, the number of persons in the German Empire engaged in the three great groups of occupations—agriculture, industry and commerce—together with their families, amounted roughly to thirty-five million in the wage earners and salaried employees group, and seventeen million in the independent group. Hence, a party could well have a majority among the wage workers, but a minority among the population as a whole. (P. 33.)

This is an example of Kautsky's arguments. Is it not the counter-revolutionary whining of a bourgeois? Why have you, Mr. Kautsky, relegated all in the "independent" group to the category of the disfranchised, when you know very well that the overwhelming majority of the Russian peasants do not employ hired labour, and do not, therefore, lose their political rights? Is this not falsification?

Why do you not, oh, learned economist, quote the facts with which you are perfectly familiar and which are to be found in the very same German statistical returns for 1907 relating to hired labour in agriculture according to the size of farms? Why did you not quote these facts for the benefit of the German workers, the readers of your pamphlet, and thus enable them to see *how many exploiters there are*, how small is the number of exploiters out of the total number of "farmers" who figure in German statistics.

* A character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, half-literate, who read everything mechanically, syllable by syllable—an allusion to superficial reading of history without understanding its meaning.—*Ed.*

Because your renegacy has transformed you into a sycophant of the bourgeoisie.

The term, capitalist, don't you see, is a legally vague concept, and Kautsky for the space of several pages hurls his wrath against the "tyranny" of the Soviet constitution. This "serious scholar" has no objection to the British bourgeoisie taking several centuries to work out a new (new for the Middle Ages) bourgeois constitution, but this representative of lackey's science will not give any time to us, the workers and peasants. He expects us to have a constitution all complete to the very last word in a few months.

"Tyranny!" Think what a depth of mean subserviency to the bourgeoisie and of the most idiotic pedantry is contained in *such* a reproach. When thoroughly bourgeois and, for the most part, reactionary lawyers in the capitalist countries have for centuries or decades been drawing up most detailed rules and regulations and writing hundreds of volumes of various codes and laws and of interpretations of these laws *to oppress* the workers, to bind the *poor man* hand and foot and to place a hundred and one hindrances and obstacles in the way of the common toiling people—Oh, then, bourgeois liberals and Mr. Kautsky see no "tyranny." This is "law" and "order"! The ways in which the poor are to be "kept down" have all been thought out and written down. There are thousands and thousands of bourgeois lawyers and bureaucrats (Kautsky says nothing about them, probably for the very reason that Marx attached enormous significance to the *smashing* of the bureaucratic machine. . . .)—lawyers and bureaucrats who are able to interpret the laws in such a way that the workers and average peasants can never break through the barbed wire entanglements of these laws. This, of course, is not the "tyranny" of the bourgeoisie, it is not a dictatorship of the filthy and self-seeking exploiters who are sucking the blood of the people. Oh, nothing of the kind! It is "pure democracy," which is becoming purer and purer every day.

But now that the toiling and exploited classes, for the first time in history, while cut off by the imperialist war from their brothers across the frontier, have set up *their own* Soviets, called to the work of political construction *those masses* which the bourgeoisie used to oppress and stupefy, and begun *themselves* to build up a new, proletarian state, begun in the heat of furious struggle, in the fire of civil war, to sketch the fundamental principles of a state

without exploiters, then all the scoundrelly bourgeoisie, the whole gang of blood-suckers, with Kautsky echoing them, howl about "tyranny." Indeed, how will these ignorant people, these workers and peasants, this "mob," be able to interpret their laws? How can these common toilers acquire the sense of justice without the aid of educated lawyers, of bourgeois writers, of the Kautskys, and the wise old bureaucrats?

Mr. Kautsky quotes from my speech of April 29, 1918, the words:

> The masses themselves determine the procedure and the time of elections.

And Kautsky, the "pure democrat," infers from this:

> Hence, it would seem that every assembly of electors may determine the procedure of elections at their own discretion. Tyranny and opportunity of getting rid of undesirable opposition elements in the ranks of the proletariat itself have thus been carried to a high degree. (P. 37.)

Well, what is the difference between these remarks and the talk of the hired capitalist hack journalist who howls about the tyranny of the masses who oppress the "industrious" workers who are "willing to work" during a strike? Why is the bureaucratic and *bourgeois* method of determining electoral procedure under "pure," bourgeois democracy *not* tyranny? Why should the sense of justice *among the masses who have risen to fight* their age-long exploiters, and who are being educated and hardened in this desperate struggle, be lower than that of a *handful* of bureaucrats, intellectuals and lawyers who are steeped in *bourgeois* prejudices?

Kautsky is a true socialist. Don't dare suspect the sincerity of this very respectable father of a family, of this very honest citizen. He is an ardent and convinced supporter of the victory of the workers, of the proletarian revolution. All he wants is that the sentimental petty-bourgeois and philistine intellectuals in nightcaps should, first, *before* the masses begin to move, *before* they enter into furious battle with the exploiters, and certainly *without* civil war—draw up a moderate and exact set of *rules for the development of the revolution.*

Burning with profound moral indignation, our most learned Yudushka Golovlev * tells the German workers that on April 14, 1918, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets decided to expel the representative of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and

* A character in Shchedrin's novel, *The Golovlev Family,* personifying the pious hypocrite.—*Ed.*

Mensheviks from the Soviets, and burning with noble indignation Yudushka Kautsky writes:

> This measure is not directed against definite persons guilty of definite punishable offences. . . . The constitution of the Soviet Republic does not contain a single word about the immunity of Soviet deputies. It is not definite *persons*, but definite *parties*, that are expelled from the Soviets. (P. 37.)

Yes, this is really awful, an intolerable departure from the pure democracy, according to the rules of which our revolutionary Yudushka Kautsky will make a revolution. We Russian Bolsheviks should first of all have guaranteed immunity for the Savinkovs and Co., the Lieber-Dans * and Potresovs (the so-called "Activists" **) and Co., and then we should have drawn up a criminal code proclaiming participation in the Czecho-Slovak counter-revolutionary war, or an alliance with the German imperialists in the Ukraine or in Georgia *against* the workers of this country, to be "punishable offences," and *only then*, on the basis of this criminal code, should we have been justified, in accordance with the principles of "pure democracy," in expelling "definite persons" from the Soviets. It goes without saying that the Czecho-Slovaks, who were subsidised by the Anglo-French capitalists through the medium, or thanks to the agitation, of the Savinkovs, Potresovs and Lieber-Dans, and the Krasnovs who received shells from the Germans through the medium of the Ukrainian and Tiflis Mensheviks, would have sat quietly waiting until we were ready with our proper criminal code, and, like the purest democrats, would have confined themselves to the role of an "opposition."

No less moral indignation is roused in Kautsky's breast by the fact that the Soviet constitution disfranchises all those who "employ hired labour with a view to profit." He writes:

> A worker working in his own home, or a small master employing but one journeyman, may live and feel quite like a proletarian, but he has no vote! (P. 36.)

What a departure from "pure democracy"! What injustice! Up till now all Marxists have thought—and thousands of facts have proved it—that the small masters were the most unscrupulous and grasping exploiters of hired labour, but our Yudushka Kautsky

* A combination of the names Lieber and Dan, leaders of the Mensheviks. —*Ed.*

** Right Mensheviks, participants in counter-revolutionary activities against the Soviet power.—*Ed.*

takes the small masters, not as a *class* (who invented the pernicious theory of the class struggle?) but as single individuals, exploiters who "live and feel quite like proletarians." The famous "thrifty Agnes," who we thought had been dead for a long time, has come to life again under Kautsky's pen. This "thrifty Agnes" was invented and set going in German literature a score of years ago by that "pure" democrat, the bourgeois Eugen Richter. He predicted untold calamities that were to result from the dictatorship of the proletariat, from the confiscation of the capital of the exploiters, and used to ask with an innocent air, who was a capitalist in the legal sense of the term? He took as an example the poor, thrifty seamstress ("thrifty Agnes") who was robbed of her last farthing by the wicked "dictators of the proletariat." There was a time when the whole of German Social-Democracy poked fun at this "thrifty Agnes" of the pure democrat, Eugen Richter. But that was a long, long time ago, when Bebel was still alive and when he used to declare frankly and truthfully that there were many National-Liberals in our party; that was very long ago, when Kautsky was not yet a renegade.

Now "thrifty Agnes" has come to life again, in the person of the "small master, who lives and feels quite like a proletarian," and who employs "only one" journeyman. The wicked Bolsheviks are ill-treating this small master, are depriving him of his vote! It is true that "every assembly of electors," as Kautsky tells us, may, in the Soviet Republic, admit into its midst a poor little master who, for instance, may be connected with this or that factory, if, by way of an exception, he is not an exploiter, and if he really "lives and feels quite like a proletarian." But can one rely only on the knowledge of life, the sense of justice of an irregular factory meeting of common workers acting (oh, horror!) without a written code? Clearly, would it not be better to grant the vote to *all* the exploiters, to *all* those who employ hired labour rather than to risk the possibility of "thrifty Agnes" and the "small master who lives and feels quite like a proletarian" being wronged by the workers?

Let the contemptible, scoundrelly renegades, amidst the applause of the bourgeoisie and social-chauvinists,* abuse our Soviet con-

* I have just read a leading article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of October 22, 1918, enthusiastically reviewing Kautsky's pamphlet. This organ of the Stock

stitution for disfranchising the exploiters. This is good, because it will accelerate and deepen the split between the revolutionary workers of Europe and the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, the Renaudels and Longuets, the Hendersons and MacDonalds, and all the old leaders of and old traitors to socialism.

The masses of the oppressed classes, the class-conscious and honest revolutionary proletarian leaders, will be on *our side.* It will be sufficient for such proletarians and such masses to become acquainted with our Soviet constitution for them to say at once: "These are indeed *our people,* theirs is a real workers' party; theirs is a real workers' government, for it does not deceive the workers by talking about reforms *in the way the leaders enumerated have done;* it is really fighting the exploiters, it is really bringing about a revolution, it is *really* fighting for the complete emancipation of the working class."

The *fact* that after twelve months' "experience" the Soviets are depriving the exploiters of the franchise *shows* that the Soviets are really organisations of the oppressed masses and not of social-imperialists and social-pacifists who have sold themselves to the bourgeoisie. The *fact* that the Soviets have disfranchised the exploiters, *shows* that they are not organs of petty-bourgeois compromise with the capitalists, not organs of parliamentary chatter (of the Kautskys, the Longuets and the MacDonalds), but organs of the genuinely revolutionary proletariat who are waging a life and death struggle against the exploiters.

"Kautsky's pamphlet is almost unknown here," a well-informed comrade in Berlin wrote to me a few days ago (to-day is October 30). I would advise our ambassadors in Germany and Switzerland not to stint a thousand or so in buying up this book and *distributing it gratis* among the class-conscious workers in order to trample this "European"—read: imperialist and reformist—Social-Democracy, which has long been a "stinking corpse," in the mud.

At the end of his book, on pages 61 and 63, Mr. Kautsky bitterly laments over the fact that "the new theory" (as he calls Bolshevism, fearing even to touch Marx's and Engels' analysis of the Paris Commune) "finds supporters even among old democracies, like,

Exchange is satisfied, and no wonder. At the same time a comrade writes to me from Berlin stating the *Vorwärts,* the organ of the Scheidemannites, has in a special article subscribed to almost every line Kautsky has written. Congratulations!

for instance, Switzerland." Kautsky "cannot understand how this theory can be adopted by German Social-Democrats."

No; it is quite understandable; for after the serious lessons of the war the revolutionary masses are becoming sick and tired of the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys.

"We" have always been in favour of democracy, Kautsky writes, can we suddenly renounce it?

"We," the opportunists of Social-Democracy have always been opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and Kolb and Co. proclaimed this *long ago.* Kautsky knows this and it is futile for him to imagine that he can conceal from his readers the obvious fact that he has "returned to the fold" of the Bernsteins and Kolbs.

"We," revolutionary Marxists, have never made an idol of "pure" (bourgeois) democracy. As is well known, in 1903 Plekhanov was a revolutionary Marxist (before his lamentable turn which brought him to the position of a Russian Scheidemann). In that year Plekhanov declared at the congress of our Party, which was then adopting its programme, that in the revolution the proletariat would, if necessary, disfranchise the capitalists and *disperse any parliament* that was found to be counter-revolutionary. That this is the only view that corresponds to Marxism will be clear to anybody even from the statements of Marx and Engels which I have quoted above; it follows logically from all the fundamental principles of Marxism.

"We," revolutionary Marxists, never made the speeches to the people that are made by the Kautskians of all nations, who cringe before the bourgeoisie, adapt themselves to bourgeois parliamentarism, are silent about the *bourgeois* character of modern democracy and demand only *its* extension, demand that *it* be carried to its logical conclusion.

"We" said to the bourgeoisie: "You, exploiters and hypocrites, talk about democracy while at every step you create a thousand and one obstacles to prevent the *oppressed masses* from taking part in politics. We take you at your word and in the interests of these masses we demand the extension of *your* bourgeois democracy *in order to prepare the masses for revolution* for the purpose of overthrowing you, the exploiters. And if you exploiters attempt to offer resistance to our proletarian revolution we shall ruthlessly suppress you; we shall deprive you of your rights; more than that, we shall not give you any bread, for in our proletarian republic the exploiters will have no rights, they will be deprived of fire and

water, for we are socialists in real earnest, and not the Scheidemann or Kautskian type of socialist.

That is what "we," revolutionary Marxists, said, and shall say —and that is why the oppressed masses will support us and be with us, while the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys will be swept into the renegades' cesspool.

WHAT IS INTERNATIONALISM?

KAUTSKY is quite convinced that he is an internationalist and calls himself such. The Scheidemanns he calls "government socialists." But in defending the Mensheviks (he does not openly express his solidarity with them, but he entirely expresses their views), Kautsky has glaringly revealed the sort of "internationalism" he subscribes to. And since Kautsky is not alone, but the representative of a trend which inevitably grew up in the atmosphere of the Second International (Longuet in France, Turati in Italy, Nobs and Grimm, Greber and Nain in Switzerland, Ramsay MacDonald in England, etc.), it will be instructive to dwell on Kautsky's "internationalism."

After emphasising that the Mensheviks also attended the Zimmerwald Conference [7] (a diploma, certainly, but a tainted diploma), Kautsky sets out the views of the Mensheviks, with whom he agrees, in the following manner:

> The Mensheviks wanted a general peace. They wanted all the belligerents to adopt the formula: No annexations and no indemnities. The Russian army was to stand ready for battle until this had been achieved. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, demanded an immediate peace at any price; they were prepared, if need be, to make a separate peace; they tried to extort it by force by increasing the state of disorganisation of the army, which was already bad enough. (P. 27.)

In Kautsky's opinion the Bolsheviks should not have taken power, and should have been satisfied with the Constituent Assembly.

Thus, the internationalism of Kautsky and the Mensheviks amounted to this: To demand reforms from the imperialist bourgeois government, but to continue to support it, and to continue to support the war that this government was waging until all the belligerents had accepted the formula: No annexations, no indemnities. This view was repeatedly expressed by Turati and by the Kautskians (Haase and others), and Longuet and Co., who declared that they stood for "defence of the fatherland."

Theoretically, this is complete inability to dissociate oneself from the social-chauvinists and complete confusion on the question of the defence of the fatherland. Politically, it is the substitution of petty-bourgeois nationalism for internationalism, and desertion to the reformists' camp, the renunciation of the revolution.

From the point of view of the proletariat, the recognition of "defence of the fatherland" is justification of the present war, an admission that it is legitimate. And since the war remains an imperialist war, both under a monarchy and under a republic, irrespective of the territory—mine or the enemies'—occupied by the enemy troops at the given moment, the recognition of the defence of the fatherland is, *in fact*, tantamount to supporting the imperialist predatory bourgeoisie, it is tantamount to the utter betrayal of socialism. In Russia, even under Kerensky, under the bourgeois democratic republic, the war continued to be an imperialist war, it was being waged by the bourgeoisie as a ruling class (war is the "continuation of politics"); and a very striking expression of the imperialist character of the war were the secret treaties for the partition of the world and the plunder of other countries, which had been concluded by the ex-Tsar with the capitalists of England and France.

The Mensheviks deceived the people in a most despicable manner by calling this war a defensive or revolutionary war; and by approving the policy of the Mensheviks, Kautsky is approving the deception practised on the people, is approving the part played by the petty bourgeoisie who are helping capital to trick the workers and to harness them to the chariot of the imperialists. Kautsky is advocating a characteristically petty-bourgeois philistine policy by pretending (and trying to make the masses believe the absurd idea) that *putting forward a slogan* alters the position. The entire history of bourgeois democracy refutes this illusion; the bourgeois democrats have always advanced, and still advance, all sorts of attractive "slogans" in order to deceive the people. The point is *to test* their sincerity, to compare their words with their *deeds,* not to be satisfied with idealistic charlatan *phrases,* but to get down to class reality. An imperialist war does not cease to be an imperialist war when charlatans or phrasemongers or petty-bourgeois philistines put forward sentimental "slogans"; it ceases to be such only when the *class* which is conducting the imperialist war, and which is bound to it by millions of economic threads (and sometimes ropes),

is *overthrown* and is replaced at the helm of state by the really revolutionary class, the proletariat. There is no other way of *getting out of an imperialist war,* and out of an *imperialist and predatory peace.*

By approving the foreign policy of the Mensheviks, and by declaring it to be internationalist and Zimmerwaldian, Kautsky, first, confirms the rottenness of the opportunist Zimmerwald majority (it was not without reason that we, the *Left* Zimmerwaldians, at once dissociated ourselves from it!) and secondly—and this is the most important—Kautsky passes from the position of the proletariat to that of the petty bourgeoisie, from the revolutionary position to the reformist position.

The proletariat fights for the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist bourgeoisie; the petty bourgeois fights for the reformist "improvement" of imperialism, for adaptation and *submission* to it. When Kautsky was still a Marxist, for instance, in 1909, when he wrote his *Road to Power,* he expounded the view that war would inevitably lead to revolution, and he spoke of the approach of an *era of revolutions.* The Basel Manifesto of 1912 directly and definitely speaks of a *proletarian revolution* in connection with that very imperialist war between the German and the British coalitions, which actually broke out in 1914. But in 1918, when these revolutions did begin as a result of the war, Kautsky, instead of pointing out that they were inevitable, instead of pondering over and thinking out to the end the *revolutionary* tactics and the methods of preparing for revolution, began to represent the reformist tactics of the Mensheviks as internationalism. Is not this renegacy?

Kautsky praises the Mensheviks for maintaining the fighting efficiency of the army, and he blames the Bolsheviks for having increased the state of "disorganisation of the army" which was already disorganised enough. This means praising reformism and submission to the imperialist bourgeoisie, blaming the revolution and abjuring it; because even under Kerensky, the maintenance of the fighting efficiency of the army meant its maintenance under the *bourgeois* (albeit republican) command. Everybody knows, and the progress of events have confirmed it, that this republican army preserved the *Kornilov* spirit because the commanding staff was Kornilovist. The bourgeois officers could not help being Kornilovists; they could not help gravitating towards imperialism and towards the forcible suppression of the proletariat. All that the

Menshevik tactics amounted to in *practice* was to leave all the foundations of the imperialist war, all the foundations of the *bourgeois* dictatorship intact, to repair details and to paint up minor defects ("reforms").

On the other hand, not a single great revolution has ever refrained from "disorganising" the army and cannot now refrain from doing so; because the army is the most rigid instrument for supporting the old régime, the most hardened bulwark of bourgeois discipline, of the rule of capital, of preserving among the toiling masses and imbuing them with the servile spirit of submission and subjection to capital. Counter-revolution has never tolerated, and never could tolerate, the armed workers side by side with the army. Engels wrote that in France, after each revolution, the workers were armed:

> Therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for whatever bourgeois group was at the helm of the state.*

The armed workers were the embryo of a *new* army, the nucleus of the organization of a *new* social order. The first commandment of the bourgeoisie was: Crush this nucleus, prevent it from growing. The first commandment of every victorious revolution, as Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasised, was: Smash the old army, dissolve it and replace it by a new one. In rising to power the new social class never could, and cannot now, attain power or consolidate it except by absolutely disintegrating the old army ("disorganisation!" the reactionary or cowardly philistines will howl), except by passing through a most difficult and painful period without any army (as was the case also during the French Revolution) and by gradually building up in the midst of the civil war a new army, a new discipline, a new military organisation of the new class.[8] Formerly, Kautsky the historian understood this. The renegade Kautsky has forgotten it.

What right has Kautsky to call the Scheidemannites "government socialists" if he approves of the tactics of the Mensheviks in the Russian Revolution? By supporting Kerensky and by joining his Cabinet, the Mensheviks also became government socialists. Kautsky will not be able to wriggle out of this conclusion if he attempts to raise the question: *Which ruling class* is waging the imperialist war? But Kautsky avoids raising the question of the ruling class,

* *Civil War in France*, p. 9.—*Ed.*

a question that must be put by a Marxist, because the mere raising of the question would expose him as a renegade.

The Kautskians in Germany, the Longuetists in France, and the Turatis and Co. in Italy, argue in this way: Socialism presupposes the equality and freedom of nations, their self-determination; *hence*, when our country is attacked, or when enemy troops invade our territory, it is the right and duty of the socialists to defend the country. But, theoretically, such an argument is either a hollow mockery of socialism or a fraudulent evasion; from the point of view of practical politics, this argument coincides with that of the very ignorant *muzhik* who has no conception of the social, the *class* character of the war, and the tasks of a revolutionary party during a reactionary war.

Socialism is opposed to violence against nations. That is indisputable. But socialism is opposed to violence against men in general. Apart from Christian-Anarchists and Tolstoyans, however, no one has yet drawn the conclusion from this that socialism is opposed to *revolutionary* violence. Hence, to talk about "violence" in general, without examining the conditions which distinguish reactionary from revolutionary violence, means being a petty-bourgeois who renounces revolution, or else it means simply deceiving oneself and others by sophistry.

The same holds good about violence against nations. Every war is the exercise of violence against nations, but that does not prevent socialists from being in *favour* of a revolutionary war. The class character of the war—that is the fundamental question which confronts a socialist (who is not a renegade). The imperialist war of 1914-1918 is a war between two coalitions of the imperialist bourgeoisie for the partition of the world, for the division of the booty, and for the plunder and strangulation of small and weak nations. This was the appraisal of the war given in the Basel manifesto in 1912,* and since then it has been confirmed by facts. Whoever departs from this point of view ceases to be a socialist.

If a German, under Wilhelm, or a Frenchman, under Clemenceau, says: As a socialist, it is my right and duty to defend my country if it is invaded by an enemy, he argues not like a socialist, not like an internationalist, not like a revolutionary proletarian, but like a *petty-bourgeois nationalist.* Because this argument leaves out of

* See "Manifesto of the International Socialist Congress at Basel," V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 468-472.—*Ed.*

account revolutionary class struggle of the workers against capital, it leaves out of account the appraisal of the war as a *whole* from the point of view of the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat: that is, it leaves out internationalism, and all that remains is a miserable and narrow-minded nationalism. My country is being wronged, that is all I care about—this is what this argument reduces itself to, and that is why it is petty-bourgeois nationalist narrow-mindedness. It is the same as if in regard to individual violence, violence against an individual, one were to argue that socialism is opposed to violence; therefore, I had better be a traitor rather than go to prison.

The Frenchman, the German or Italian who says: "Socialism is opposed to violence against nations; *therefore* I defend myself when my country is invaded"—*betrays* socialism and internationalism, because *he only thinks of his own* "country," he puts "his own . . . bourgeoisie" above everything else and forgets about the *international connections* which make the war an imperialist war, and make *his* bourgeois a link in the chain of imperialist plunder.

All philistines, and all stupid and ignorant yokels argue in exactly the same way as the renegade Kautskians, Longuetists, the Turati-ists argue: "The enemy has invaded my country; I do not care about anything else." *

The socialist, the revolutionary proletarian, the internationalist, argues differently. He says: The character of the war (whether reactionary or revolutionary) is not determined by who the aggressor was, or whose territory the "enemy" has occupied; it is *determined by the class* that is waging the war, and the politics of which this war is a continuation. If the war is a reactionary, imperialist war, that is, if it is being waged by two world coalitions of the imperialist, violent, predatory reactionary bourgeoisie, then every bourgeoisie (even of the smallest country) becomes a participant in the plunder, and my duty as a representative of the revolutionary proletariat is to prepare for the *world proletarian*

* The social-chauvinists (the Scheidemanns, Renaudels, Hendersons, Gompers and Co.) absolutely refuse to talk about the "International" during the war. They regard the enemies of their respective bourgeoisies as "traitors" to socialism. They *support* the policy of conquest of their respective bourgeoisies. The social-pacifists (*i.e.*, the socialists in words and petty-bourgeois pacifists in practice) express all sorts of "internationalist" sentiments, protest against annexations, etc., but in practice, they continue to support their respective imperialist bourgeoisies. The difference between the two types is slight. It is like the difference between two capitalists—one with rude, and the other with sweet words on his lips.

revolution as the *only* escape from the horrors of a world war. I must argue, not from the point of view of "my" country (for this is the argument of a poor, stupid, nationalist philistine who does not realise that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of *my share* in the preparation, in the propaganda and in the accelerations of the world proletarian revolution.

This is what internationalism is, and this is the duty of the internationalist, of the revolutionary worker, of the genuine socialist. This is the *A.B.C.* that Kautsky the renegade has "forgotten." And his apostasy becomes still more palpable when, after approving of the tactics of the petty-bourgeois nationalists (the Mensheviks in Russia, the Longuetists in France, and Turatis in Italy, and the Haases and Co. in Germany) he begins to criticise the Bolshevik tactics. This is what he says:

> The Bolshevik revolution was based on the assumption that it would become the starting point of a general European revolution, that the bold initiative of Russia would arouse the proletarians of all Europe to insurrection.
>
> On this assumption it was, of course, immaterial what forms the Russian separate peace would assume, what hardships and territorial mutilations [*Verstummelungen*] it would cause the Russian people, and what interpretation of the self-determination of nations it would give. It was also immaterial whether Russia was able to defend herself or not. According to this opinion, the European revolution would be the best protection of the Russian Revolution, and would bring complete and genuine self-determination to all the peoples inhabiting the former Russian territory. A revolution in Europe, which would establish and consolidate the socialist order there, would also become the means of removing the obstacles to the introduction of the socialist system of production, which existed in Russia owing to the economic backwardness of the country. All this would be very logical and very sound if the main assumption were granted, *viz.*, that the Russian Revolution would necessarily let loose a European revolution. But what if that did not happen?
>
> So far the assumption has not been justified, and the proletariat of Europe is now being accused of having abandoned and betrayed the Russian Revolution. This is an accusation levelled against unknown persons, for who is to be held responsible for the behaviour of the European proletariat? (P. 28.)

And Kautsky then goes on to repeat again and again that Marx, Engels and Bebel were more than once mistaken in their prediction of the advent of anticipated revolutions, but that they never based their tactics on the expectation of a revolution at a "*definite date*" (p. 29), whereas, he says, the Bolsheviks "staked everything on a general European revolution."

We have deliberately quoted this long passage in order to show our readers with what "agility" Kautsky counterfeits Marxism by

palming off banal and reactionary, philistine views in its stead.

First, to ascribe to an opponent an obvious absurdity and then to refute it is a trick that is played by not over-clever people. If the Bolsheviks had based their tactics on the expectation of a revolution in other countries that was to come *on a definite date,* they would have been guilty of utter folly. But the Bolshevik Party has never been guilty of that folly. In my *Letter to the American Workers,* of August 20, 1918,* I expressly repudiate such folly, when I say that we counted on an American revolution, but *not* at any definite date. I propounded the very same idea more than once in my controversy with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and "Left Communists" (January-March, 1918). Kautsky has committed a little, a very little forgery, and on this he based his criticism of Bolshevism. Kautsky has confused tactics which are based on the expectation of a European revolution in the more or less near future, but not on a definite date, with tactics based on the expectation of a European revolution on a definite date. A little forgery, a very little one!

The last-named tactics are foolish. The first-named are *obligatory* for all Marxists, for all revolutionary proletarians and internationalists; they are *obligatory,* because they alone in a properly Marxian way take into account the objective situation brought about by the war in all European countries, and they alone correspond to the international tasks of the proletariat.

By substituting the petty question about an error which the Bolshevik revolutionaries might have made, but *did not,* for the important question of the foundations of revolutionary tactics in general, Kautsky has abjured all revolutionary tactics.

A renegade in politics, he is *unable to present the question* of the objective prerequisites of revolutionary tactics theoretically.

And this brings us to the second point.

Secondly, it is obligatory for the Marxists to count on a European revolution if a *revolutionary situation* exists. It is an elementary axiom of Marxism that the tactics of the socialist proletariat cannot be the same in a revolutionary situation as when there is no revolutionary situation.

If Kautsky had put this question, which is obligatory for every Marxist, he would have seen that the answer was absolutely against him. Long before the war, *all* Marxists, all socialists, were agreed

* See Little Lenin Library, Vol. 17.—*Ed.*

that a European war would create a revolutionary situation. Kautsky himself, before he became a renegade, clearly and definitely admitted this, in 1902 (in his *Social Revolution*) and in 1909 (in his *Road to Power*). It was also admitted in the name of the entire Second International by the Basel Manifesto; it is not without reason that the social-chauvinists and the Kautskians (the "Centrists," *i.e.*, those who waver between the revolutionaries and the opportunists) of all countries are mortally afraid of the corresponding declarations of the Basel Manifesto!

Hence, the expectation of a revolutionary situation in Europe was not an infatuation of the Bolsheviks, but was the *general opinion* of all Marxists. When Kautsky tries to escape from this undoubted truth with the help of phrases such as the Bolsheviks "always believed in the omnipotence of force and will," he simply utters a sonorous and empty phrase to *cover up* his flight, his shameful flight from the presentation of the question of the revolutionary situation.

To proceed. Has a revolutionary situation set in or not? Kautsky has not been able to present even this question. Economic facts provide an answer to it: the famine and ruin created by the war everywhere imply a revolutionary situation. The political facts also provide an answer to the question: ever since 1915 a splitting process has been observed in *all* countries among the old and decaying socialist parties, a process of *desertion of the masses* of the proletariat from the social-chauvinist leaders to the Left, to revolutionary ideas and moods, to revolutionary leaders.

Only a person who fears revolution and betrays it could have failed to note these facts on August 5, 1918, when Kautsky was writing his pamphlet. And now, at the end of October, 1918, the revolution is growing *in a number* of European countries, and growing very rapidly under our very eyes.* Kautsky, the "revolutionary," who still wants to be regarded as a Marxist, has proved to be a short-sighted philistine, who, like the philistines of 1847 who were ridiculed by Marx, did not see the approaching revolution!

And now we come to the third point.

Thirdly, what are the specific features of revolutionary tactics

* Within ten days after these lines were written, the German monarchy was overthrown, November 9, and revolutionary uprisings occurred in several European countries.—*Ed.*

in a European revolutionary situation? Having become a renegade, Kautsky feared to put this question, which is obligatory for every Marxist. Kautsky argues like a typical philistine petty-bourgeois, or like an ignorant peasant: has a "general European revolution" broken out or not? If it has, then *he, too,* is prepared to become a revolutionary! But under such circumstances, we will observe, every blackguard (like the scoundrels who are now trying to attach themselves to the victorious Bolsheviks) would begin to proclaim himself a revolutionary!

If there is no revolution, then Kautsky turns his back on revolution! Kautsky does not betray a shadow of understanding of the truth that a revolutionary Marxist differs from the ordinary philistine in that he is able to *preach* to the ignorant masses the necessity of the maturing revolution, to *prove* that it is inevitable, to *explain* its benefits to the people, and to *prepare* the proletariat and all the toiling and exploited masses for it.

Kautsky ascribed to the Bolsheviks an absurdity, *viz.*, that they had staked everything on a European revolution breaking out on a definite date. This absurdity has turned against Kautsky himself, because the logical conclusion of his argument is as follows: the tactics of the Bolsheviks would have been correct if a European revolution had broken out by August 5, 1918. This is the very date that Kautsky mentions as the date on which he was writing his pamphlet. And when, a few weeks after this August 5, it became clear that a revolution was approaching in a number of European countries, the whole apostasy of Kautsky, his whole falsification of Marxism, and his utter inability to reason in a revolutionary manner, or even to put the question in a revolutionary manner, became revealed in all their charm.

When the proletarians of Europe are accused of treachery, Kautsky writes, it is an accusation against unknown persons.

You are mistaken, Mr. Kautsky! Look in the mirror and you will see these "unknown persons" against whom the accusation is levelled. Kautsky assumes an air of innocence and pretends not to understand *who* has levelled the accusation, and what *meaning* it has. As a matter of fact Kautsky knows perfectly well that the accusation has been and is being levelled by the German "Lefts," by the Spartacists,[9] by Liebknecht, and his friends. The accusation expresses a *clear appreciation* of the fact that the German proletariat betrayed the Russian (and international) revolution, when

it strangled Finland, the Ukraine, Latvia, and Esthonia.[10] This accusation is directed primarily and above all, not against the masses, who are always downtrodden, but against those *leaders* who, like the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, *failed* in their duty to carry on revolutionary agitation, revolutionary propaganda and revolutionary work among the masses to combat their inertness, who in fact worked *against* the revolutionary instincts and aspirations which are always aglow in the depths of the oppressed classes. The Scheidemanns openly, crudely, cynically, and in the majority of cases for corrupt motives, betrayed the proletariat and deserted to the bourgeoisie. The Kautskians and the Longuetists did the same thing, only in a hesitating and halting manner, casting cowardly side glances at those who were stronger at the moment. In all his writings during the war Kautsky tried to *extinguish* the revolutionary spirit, instead of fostering and fanning it.

The fact that Kautsky does not even understand the enormous *theoretical importance,* and the still greater agitational and propaganda importance, of the "accusation" that the proletarians of Europe have betrayed the Russian revolution, will remain a historical monument to the philistine stupidity of the "average" leader of German official Social-Democracy! Kautsky does not understand that owing to the censorship prevailing in the German "Empire," this "accusation" was perhaps the only form in which the German socialists who have not betrayed socialism, Liebknecht and his friends, could express *their appeal to the German workers* to throw off the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, to push aside such "leaders," to emancipate themselves from their stultifying and vulgar propaganda, to rise in revolt *in spite of them, without them* and *over their heads.* It was the call *for revolution!*

Kautsky does not understand this. How is he to understand the tactics of the Bolsheviks? Can a man who renounces revolution in general be expected to weigh and appraise the conditions of the development of the revolution in one of the most "difficult" cases?

The Bolsheviks' tactics were correct; they were the *only* inter nationalist tactics, because they were based, not on the cowardly fear of a world revolution, not on a philistine "disbelief" in it, not on the narrow nationalist desire to protect "one's own" fatherland (the fatherland of one's bourgeoisie), and not "care a hang" for all the rest; they were based on a correct (and universally admitted, before the war and before the renegacy of the social-

chauvinists and social-pacifists) *estimation* of the revolutionary situation in Europe. These tactics were the only internationalist tactics, because they did the utmost possible in one country for the development, support and stirring up of *the revolution in all countries.* The correctness of these tactics has been confirmed by the enormous success that has been achieved, because Bolshevism (not due to the merits of the Russian Bolsheviks, but to the most profound sympathy the *masses* everywhere displayed for tactics that are revolutionary in practice) has become *world*-Bolshevism, it has produced an idea, a theory, a programme and tactics, which practically and concretely differ from those of social-chauvinism and social-pacifism. Bolshevism has vanquished the old, decayed International of the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, the Renaudels and Longuets, the Hendersons and MacDonalds, who, henceforth, will be treading on each other's heels, dreaming about "unity" and trying to revive a corpse. Bolshevism *created* the ideological and tactical foundations of a Third International, a really proletarian and Communist International, which will take into consideration both the gain of the peaceful epoch and the experience of the *epoch of revolution, which has now begun.*

Bolshevism has popularised throughout the world the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," has translated these words from the Latin, first into Russian, and then into *all* the languages of the world, and has shown by the living example of the *Soviet government* that the workers and poorer peasantry, *even* of a backward country, even with the least experience, education and habits of organisation, *have been able* for a whole year, amidst gigantic difficulties and amidst the struggle against the exploiters (who were supported by the bourgeoisie of the *whole* world) to maintain the power of the toilers, to create a democracy that is immeasurably higher and wider than all previous democracies of the world, and to *begin,* with the aid of the creative ability of tens of millions of workers and peasants, the practical realisation of socialism.

Bolshevism has helped in a practical way to develop the proletarian revolution in Europe and America more powerfully than any party in any other country has ever succeeded in doing. While the workers of the whole world are realising more and more clearly every day that the tactics of the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys have not freed them from the imperialist war and from wage slavery under the imperialist bourgeoisie, and that these tactics cannot

serve as model for any country, the masses of the proletarians of all countries are realising more and more every day that Bolshevism has indicated the right road of escape from the horrors of war and imperialism, that Bolshevism *can serve as a model of tactics for all.*

Not only the European, but the world proletarian revolution is maturing before the eyes of all, and it has been assisted, has been accelerated, has been supported, by the victory of the proletariat in Russia. Is all this enough for the complete victory of socialism? Certainly not. One country cannot do more. But thanks to the Soviet government, this one country has nevertheless done so much that even if the Russian Soviet government is crushed by world imperialism to-morrow, as a result of an agreement between German and Anglo-French imperialism, for example—even in this worst possible case, Bolshevik tactics will still have brought enormous benefit to socialism and will have assisted the growth of the invincible world revolution.

SUBSERVIENCY TO THE BOURGEOISIE IN THE GUISE OF "ECONOMIC ANALYSIS"

As has been said already, if the title of Kautsky's book had properly reflected its contents it should not have borne the title: *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat,* but *A Rehash of Bourgeois Attacks on the Bolsheviks.*

The old Menshevik "theories" about the bourgeois character of the Russian Revolution, *i.e.,* the old misinterpretation of Marxism by the Mensheviks (which Kautsky *rejected* in 1905) * are now once again being hashed up by our theoretician. We must deal with this question, however tedious it may be for Russian Marxists.

The Russian Revolution is a bourgeois revolution, said all the Marxists in Russia before 1905. The Mensheviks, however, substituting liberalism for Marxism, drew the conclusion from this that hence, the proletariat must not go beyond what was acceptable to the bourgeoisie and must pursue a policy of compromise with it. The Bolsheviks said that this was a bourgeois-liberal theory. The bourgeoisie, they said, was trying to bring about the reform of the state on bourgeois, on *reformist,* and not on revolutionary lines,

* See V. I. Lenin, *Two Tactics of the Social-Democracy in the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution* and *The Revolution of 1905,* Little Lenin Library, Vols. 5 and 22.—*Ed.*

preserving the monarchy, landlordism, etc., as far as possible. The proletariat must not allow itself to be "bound" by the reformism of the bourgeoisie, but must carry through the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the end. The Bolsheviks formulated the relation of *class* forces in the bourgeois revolution in the following manner: the proletariat, joining to itself the peasantry, will neutralise the liberal bourgeoisie, and utterly destroy the monarchy, mediævalism and landlordism.

The alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry *in general* reveals the bourgeois character of the revolution because the peasantry in general are small producers who stand on the basis of commodity production. And the Bolsheviks immediately added: Further, the proletariat will join to itself *the whole of the semi-proletariat* (all the toilers and all those who are exploited), will neutralise the middle peasantry and *overthrow* the bourgeoisie: this will be the socialist revolution, as distinct from the bourgeois-democratic revolution (see my pamphlet: *Two Tactics*, published in 1905, and reprinted in Petrograd in 1907,* in the symposium *Twelve Years*).

Kautsky took an indirect part in this controversy in 1905. In reply to an enquiry by the then Menshevik Plekhanov, he expressed an opinion that was, in fact, *opposed* to that of Plekhanov, which provoked particular ridicule in the Bolshevik press at the time. But now Kautsky does not utter a single word about the controversies of that time (for fear of being exposed by his own statements) and thereby deprives the German reader of the opportunity of understanding the gist of the matter. Mr. Kautsky could not very well tell the German workers in 1918 that in 1905 he had been in favour of an alliance of the workers with the peasants and not with the liberal bourgeoisie, and he could not tell them the conditions he advocated for this alliance, and the programme he had proposed for it.

Retreating from his old position, Kautsky, on the pretext of making an "economic analysis," and uttering proud words about "historical materialism," now advocates the subordination of the workers to the bourgeoisie, and, with the aid of quotations from the Menshevik Maslov, chews the cud of the old liberal views of the Mensheviks; the quotations are intended to illustrate the brand-new

* Little Lenin Library, Vol. 22.—*Ed.*

idea about the backwardness of Russia, but the deduction drawn from this new idea is the old one that in a bourgeois revolution the proletariat must not go further than the bourgeoisie! And this in the teeth of all that Marx and Engels said when comparing the bourgeois revolution in France in 1789-1793 with the bourgeois revolution in Germany in 1848!

Before dealing with the chief "argument" and the main content of Kautsky's so-called "economic analysis," we will point out that the very first sentences in Kautsky's disquisition reveal a curious confusion, or superficiality, of thought. Our "theoretician" says:

> Agriculture, and precisely small peasant production, is to this day the economic foundation of Russia. About four-fifths, and perhaps even five-sixths of the population live by it. (P. 45.)

First of all, my dear theoretician, have you thought about how many exploiters there might be among this mass of small producers? Certainly not more than one-tenth of the total, and in the towns still less, because large-scale production is more highly developed there. Take even an incredibly high figure; assume that one-fifth of the small producers are exploiters who lose the franchise. Even then you will see that the 66 per cent of Bolsheviks at the Fifth Congress of Soviets represented the *majority of the population*. To this must be added that there has always been a considerable section of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries which was in favour of the Soviet government, *i.e.*, in principle all the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries were in favour of the Soviet government, and when a section of them, in July 1918, raised the adventurist insurrection, two new parties split away from them, *viz.*, the so-called "Narodnik-Communists" and the "Revolutionary Communists" (consisting of prominent Socialist-Revolutionaries who had been nominated for important posts in the government by the old party; for instance, Zacks belonged to the first-mentioned new party, and Kolegayev belonged to the second). Hence, Kautsky has himself—unwittingly—refuted the ridiculous fable that the Bolsheviks only had the support of a minority of the population.

Secondly, my dear theoretician, have you thought about the fact that the small peasant producer *inevitably* oscillates between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie? Kautsky very conveniently "forgot" this Marxian truth, which has been confirmed by the whole of the modern history of Europe, because it shatters the Menshevik

"theory" that he repeats! Had Kautsky not "forgotten" this he could not have denied the necessity for a proletarian dictatorship in a country in which the small peasant producer is predominant.

Let us examine the main content of our theoretician's "economic analysis."

That the Soviet regime is a dictatorship, cannot be disputed, says Kautsky. "But is it the dictatorship of the proletariat?" (P. 34.)

According to the Soviet constitution the peasants form the majority of the population which is entitled to participate in legislation and administration. What is presented to us as a dictatorship of the *proletariat* would be—if carried out consistently, and if, generally speaking, a single class could directly exercise a dictatorship, which in reality can only be exercised by a party—a dictatorship of the peasantry. (Pp. 34 and 35.)

And, elated over this profound and clever argument, good Kautsky tries to be witty and says:

It would appear, therefore, that the most painless realisation of socialism is best secured when it is put in the hands of the peasants. (P. 35.)

Arguing in great detail, and citing extremely learned quotations from the semi-liberal Maslov, our theoretician advances a new idea—*viz.*, that the peasants are interested in high grain prices, in low wages for the urban workers, etc., etc. Incidentally, the less attention our author pays to the really new phenomena of the post-war period—such as, for example, that the peasants demand for their grain, not money, but goods, and that they lack the necessary agricultural implements which cannot be obtained in sufficient quantities for any amount of money—the more tedious the enunciation of these new ideas become. But of this more anon.

Thus, Kautsky charges the Bolsheviks, the party of the proletariat, with having surrendered the dictatorship, surrendered the work of carrying out socialism to the petty-bourgeois peasantry. Excellent, Mr. Kautsky! But what, in your enlightened opinion, should the attitude of the proletarian party towards the petty-bourgeois peasantry have been?

Our theoretician, evidently bearing in mind the proverb: "Speech is silver but silence is golden," preferred to remain silent. But he gives himself away by the following argument:

Originally, the peasants' Soviets were organisations of the *peasantry* in general. Now the Soviet Republic proclaims that the Soviets are organisations of the proletarians and the *poor* peasants. The well-to-do peasants are de-

prived of representation in the Soviets. The poor peasant is declared to be the permanent and mass product of the socialist agrarian reform under the "dictatorship of the proletariat." (P. 48.)

What deadly irony: It is the kind of irony that is heard in Russia from the lips of every bourgeois: they all jeer and gloat over the fact that the Soviet Republic openly admits the existence of poor peasants. They jeer at socialism. They have a right to do that. But a "socialist" who laughs at the idea that after four years of most ruinous war there should be (and will be for a long time) poor peasants in Russia—such a socialist could only have been born at a time of wholesale renegacy.

Listen further:

The Soviet Republic interferes in the relations between the rich and poor peasants, but not by redistributing the land. In order to relieve the bread shortage in the towns, detachments of armed workers were sent into the villages to confiscate the rich peasants' surplus stocks. Part of that stock was distributed among the urban population, the other part was distributed among the poorest peasants. (P. 48.)

Of course, Kautsky, the socialist and Marxist, is profoundly indignant at the idea that such a measure should be extended beyond the environs of large towns (as a matter of fact it is practised all over our country). With the matchless, incomparable and admirable coolness (or pig-headedness) of a philistine, Kautsky, the socialist and Marxist, says didactically:

It [the expropriation of the well-to-do peasants] introduces a new element of unrest and civil war into the process of production [civil war introduced into the "process of production"—this is something supernatural!] which urgently needs order and security for its recovery. (P. 49.)

Oh, yes, of course, it is quite proper for Kautsky, the Marxist and socialist, to sigh and shed tears for order and security for the exploiters and grain profiteers who hoard their surplus stocks of grain, sabotage the grain monopoly law, and reduce the urban population to famine. "We are all socialists and Marxists and internationalists," sing the Kautskys, the Heinrich Webers (Vienna), the Longuets (Paris), the MacDonalds (London), etc., in chorus, "we are all in favour of a working class revolution, only . . . only we would like a revolution that does not disturb the order and security of the grain profiteers." Yes, and we camouflage this dirty subserviency to the capitalists by a "Marxist" reference to the "process

of production." If this is Marxism, what is being a flunkey of the bourgeoisie?

Note the conclusion our theoretician arrives at. He accuses the Bolsheviks of palming off the dictatorship of the peasantry as the dictatorship of the proletariat. But at the same time he accuses us of introducing civil war into the rural districts (which we think is to our credit), of despatching armed detachments of workers to the villages, who publicly proclaim that they are exercising the "dictatorship of the proletariat and of the poorest peasantry," assist the latter and confiscate from the profiteers, from the rich peasants, the surplus stocks of grain which they are hoarding in contravention of the grain monopoly law!

On the one hand, our Marxist theoretician stands for pure democracy, for the subordination of the revolutionary class, the leader of all the toilers and the exploited, to the majority of the population (including, therefore, the exploiters). On the other hand, as an argument *against* us, he explains that the revolution must inevitably bear a bourgeois character—bourgeois, because the peasantry as a whole stands on the basis of bourgeois social relations—and yet he pretends to defend the proletarian, the class, the Marxian point of view!

Instead of an "economic analysis," we have a first-class hodgepodge and muddle. Instead of Marxism we have fragments of liberal doctrines and the preaching of flunkeyism to the bourgeoisie and the kulaks.

The question which Kautsky has so confused was fully explained by the Bolsheviks as far back as 1905. Yes, our revolution is a bourgeois revolution *so long* as we march with the peasantry *as a whole*. This has been as clear as clear can be to us; we have said it hundreds and thousands of times since 1905, and we have never attempted to skip this necessary stage of the historical process or abolish it by decrees. Kautsky's efforts to "expose" us on this point have merely exposed his own confusion of mind and his own fear to recall what he wrote in 1905, when he was not yet a renegade.

But from *April* 1917, long before the October Revolution, that is, long before we assumed power, we publicly declared and explained to the people: the revolution cannot stop at this stage, for the country has marched forward, capitalism has advanced, ruin has attained unprecedented dimensions which (whether one likes it or not) *demands* steps forward, *to socialism*. For there was *no*

other way of advancing, of saving the country that is exhausted by war, and of alleviating the sufferings of the workers and the exploited.

Things have turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution has confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. *First*, with "all" the peasantry against the monarchy, the landlords, the mediæval régime (and to that extent, the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). *Then*, with the poorest peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, *against capitalism*, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the speculators, and to that extent the revolution becomes a *socialist* one. To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second revolutions, to separate them by anything else than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of unity with the poor peasants, is to seriously distort Marxism, to vulgarise it, to substitute liberalism in its stead. It means smuggling in a reactionary defence of the bourgeoisie against the socialist proletariat by means of quasi-scientific references to the progressive character of the bourgeoisie as compared with mediævalism.

Incidentally, it is just because the Soviets, by uniting and *drawing the masses of workers and peasants* into political life, are the most sensitive barometer (closest to the "people," in the sense in which Marx, in 1871, spoke of a genuinely people's revolution) * of the growth and development of the political, class maturity of the masses, that they represent an immeasurably higher form and type of democracy. The Soviet Constitution was not drawn up according to some "plan"; it was not drawn up in a study, and was not thrust upon the toilers by bourgeois lawyers. No, this Constitution *emerged* in the course of the development of the *class struggle* in proportion as *class antagonisms* matured. The very facts which Kautsky himself had to admit proves this.

At first, the Soviets united the peasantry as a whole. Owing to the immaturity, the backwardness, the ignorance of the poorest peasants, the leadership passed into the hands of the kulaks, of the rich, of the capitalists, of the petty bourgeoisie and of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. That was the period of the domination of the petty bourgeoisie, of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (only fools or renegades like Kautsky could regard these as socialists).

* See Karl Marx, *Letters to Kugelmann*, letter of April 12, 1871, pp. 123-124. —*Ed.*

The petty bourgeoisie inevitably vacillated between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (Kerensky, Kornilov, Savinkov) and the dictatorship of the proletariat, because, owing to the very nature of its economic position, the petty bourgeoisie is incapable of doing anything independently. Incidentally, Kautsky completely renounces Marxism by making shift, in his analysis of the Russian Revolution, with the legal and formalist concept of "democracy," which serves the bourgeoisie as a screen to conceal its domination over the masses, and as a means of deceiving them, and by *forgetting* that in practice, "democracy" sometimes means *the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie,* and sometimes the important reformism of the petty bourgeoisie which submits to that dictatorship, etc. According to Kautsky, in a capitalist country there were bourgeois parties, and there was a proletarian party which led the majority of the proletariat, the mass (the Bolsheviks), but there were no petty-bourgeois parties! The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had no *class roots,* no petty-bourgeois roots!

The vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries enlightened the masses and repelled the overwhelming majority of them, all the "rank and file," the proletarians and semi-proletarians, from such "leaders."

The Bolsheviks secured predominance in the Soviets (in Petrograd and Moscow in October 1917); the schism among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks became more pronounced.

The victorious Bolshevik revolution marked the end of vacillation. It meant the complete destruction of the monarchy and of landlordism (which had *not* been destroyed before the October Revolution). We carried the *bourgeois* revolution to its logical conclusion. The peasantry *as a whole* supported us; its antagonism to the socialist proletariat could not reveal itself at once. The Soviets united the peasantry *in general.* The class divisions among the peasantry had not yet matured, had not yet come to the surface.

That process took place in the summer and autumn of 1918. The Czecho-Slovak counter-revolutionary mutiny roused the kulaks. A wave of kulak insurrections swept over Russia. The poorest peasantry learned, not from books or newspapers, but from *life,* that its interests were irreconcilably antagonistic to those of the kulaks, of the rich, of the rural bourgeoisie. Like every other petty-bourgeois party, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries reflected the vacillation of the masses, and precisely in the summer of 1918 a split

occurred among them: one section joined the Czecho-Slovaks (insurrection in Moscow, when Proshyan, having seized the telegraph office—for one hour—informed Russia of the overthrow of the Bolsheviks; then the treachery of Muravyev, Commander-in-Chief of the army that was fighting against the Czecho-Slovaks, etc.), while another section, the one mentioned above, remained with the Bolsheviks.

The intensification of the food shortage in the towns caused the question of the grain monopoly to become more urgent (in his economic analysis, which is a mere repetition of platitudes gleaned from Maslov's writings of ten years ago, Kautsky the theoretician quite "forgot" about this monopoly!).

The old landlord and bourgeois and even the democratic-republican state had sent armed detachments to the rural districts and these detachments were practically at the disposal of the bourgeoisie. Mr. Kautsky, of course, does not know this! He does not regard this as the "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." God forbid! It is "pure democracy," especially if it has been confirmed by a bourgeois parliament! Nor has Kautsky "heard" that in the summer and autumn of 1917, Avksentiev and S. Maslov, in company with Kerensky, Tsereteli and other Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, arrested the members of the Land Committees; [11] he does not say a word about that!

The whole point is that a bourgeois state, which is exercising the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through a democratic republic, cannot confess to the people that it is serving the bourgeoisie; it cannot tell the truth and is compelled to be hypocritical.

But a state of the Paris Commune type, a Soviet state, openly tells the people the *truth* and declares that it is the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the poorest peasantry; and by this truth it rallies to its side scores and scores of millions of new citizens who are kept down under a democratic republic, but who are drawn by the Soviets into political life, into *democracy,* into the administration of the state. The Soviet Republic sends into the rural districts detachments of armed workers (primarily the most advanced) from the capitals. These workers carry socialism into the countryside, rally the poor to their side, organise and enlighten them, and help them to *suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie.*

All those who are familiar with the conditions in the rural districts, who have been in the rural districts, declare that it was not

until the summer and autumn of 1918 that the rural districts passed through the "October" (*i.e.*, proletarian) "revolution." A turning point was reached. The wave of kulak insurrections gave way to the rising of the poor, to the growth of the "Committees of the Poor."[12] In the army, the number of working class commissars, working class officers and working class commanders of divisions and armies increased. And at the very time that Kautsky, frightened by the July (1918) crisis, and the lamentations of the bourgeoisie, was running after the latter like a "cockerel," and was writing a pamphlet which breathed the conviction that the Bolsheviks were on the eve of being overthrown by the peasantry; at the very time that this simpleton regarded the desertion of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries as the "contraction" (p. 37) of the circle of those who supported the Bolsheviks—at that very time—the *real* circle of supporters of Bolshevism was expanding enormously, because millions and millions of the village poor were freeing themselves from the tutelage and the influence of the kulaks and the village bourgeoisie and were awakening to *independent* political life.

We lost hundreds of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, spineless peasant intellectuals and kulaks; but we gained millions of representatives of the poor.*

A year after the proletarian revolution in the capitals, under its influence and with its assistance, the proletarian revolution broke out in the remote rural districts, and this finally consolidated the power of the Soviets and Bolshevism, and finally proved that there was no power within the country that could combat it.

After completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution in conjunction with the peasantry in general, the Russian proletariat passed on definitely to the socialist revolution when it had succeeded in splitting up the rural districts, in rallying to its side the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians and in uniting them against the kulaks and the bourgeoisie, including the peasant bourgeoisie.

If the Bolshevik proletariat in the capitals and large industrial centres had not been able to rally the village poor to its side against the peasant rich, this would have proved that Russia was "unripe" for the socialist revolution. The peasantry would then have remained an undivided "whole," *i.e.*, they would have remained under

* At the Sixth Congress of Soviets, November 7-9, 1918, there were 967 delegates with decisive votes, and 351 delegates with consultative votes. Of the former, 950 were Bolsheviks and of the latter 335 were Bolsheviks, *i.e.*, about 97 per cent of the total number of delegates were Bolsheviks.

the economic, political, and moral leadership of the kulaks, of the rich and the bourgeoisie, and the revolution would not have passed beyond the limits of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. (It must be said in parentheses that even this would not have meant that the proletariat should not have assumed power, for the proletariat alone really has carried the bourgeois-democratic revolution to its logical conclusion, the proletariat alone has done something really important to bring nearer the world proletarian revolution, the proletariat alone has created the Soviet state, which, after the Paris Commune, is the second step in the direction of the socialist state.)

On the other hand, if the Bolshevik proletariat had attempted at once, in October-November 1917, without waiting for the class differentiation in the rural districts, without being able to *prepare* for it and bring it about, if it had attempted to "decree" a civil war or the "introduction" of socialism in the rural districts, had attempted to do without the temporary *bloc* (alliance) with the peasants in general, without making a number of concessions to the middle peasants, etc., it would have been a Blanquist distortion of Marxism, an attempt of the minority to impose its will upon the majority; it would have been a theoretical absurdity, it would have revealed a failure to understand that a general peasant revolution is *still* a bourgeois revolution, and that *without a series of transitions, transitional stages,* it cannot be transformed into a socialist revolution in a backward country.

Kautsky has confused *everything* in this very important theoretical and practical problem, and has, in practice, proved to be a mere servant of the bourgeoisie, howling against the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Kautsky has introduced similar, if not greater confusion into another very interesting and important question, namely: Was the legislative activity of the Soviet Republic in the field of agrarian changes—the most difficult and yet most important socialist changes—based on sound principles and properly carried out? We would be grateful beyond words to every West-European Marxist who, after studying at least the most important documents, would criticise our policy, because he would by that render us immense assistance and would also help the maturing revolution throughout the world. But instead of criticism, Kautsky produces incredible theoretical confusion which converts Marxism into liberalism, and which, in

practice, is a series of idle, angry, vulgar sallies against the Bolsheviks. Let the reader judge for himself.

Large landownership was made untenable by the revolution. That became clear immediately. The transference of the large estates to the peasant population became inevitable. [This is not true, Mr. Kautsky. You substitute what is "clear" to you for the attitude of the different *classes* towards the question. The history of the revolution has shown that the coalition government of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, pursued a policy of preserving large land-ownership. This was proved particularly by S. Maslov's law and by the arrest of the members of the Land Committees. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat, the "peasant population" would not have defeated the landlords who were allied with the capitalists.]

. . . On the question as to the forms in which this was to be carried out, however, there was no unity. Several solutions were conceivable. . . . [Kautsky is most of all concerned about "unity" among "socialists," no matter who called themselves by that name. He forgets that the principal classes in capitalist society are bound to arrive at different solutions.]

. . . From the socialist point of view, the most rational solution would have been to transform the large estates into state property and to allow the peasants who hitherto had been employed on them as wage labourers to cultivate them in the form of co-operative societies. But such a solution presupposes the existence of a type of agricultural labourer that does not exist in Russia. Another solution would have been to transform the large estates into state property and to divide them up into small plots, to be rented out to peasants who owned little land. Had that been done something "socialistic" would have been achieved. . . .

As usual Kautsky makes shift with the celebrated on-the-one-hand and on-the-other-hand. He places different solutions *side by side* without asking himself the question—the only realistic and Marxian question—what *stages* must be passed from capitalism to communism in such and such *special conditions?* There are agricultural labourers in Russia, although not many, but Kautsky did not touch the question which the Soviet government *did raise* as to the method of transition to a communal and co-operative form of land cultivation. The most curious thing, however, is that Kautsky sees a "something socialistic" in the renting out of small plots of land. In reality, this is a *petty-bourgeois* slogan, and there is *nothing* "socialistic" about it at all. If the "state" that rents out the land *is not* a state of the Paris Commune type, if it is a parliamentary bourgeois republic (and such is Kautsky's constant assumption) the renting out of the land in plots is a typical *liberal reform.*

Kautsky ignores the fact that the Soviet régime has abolished *all* private property in land. Worse than that: he resorts to an in-

credible subterfuge. He quotes the decrees of the Soviet government in such a way as to omit the most important part.

After stating that "small production strives for complete private property in the means of production," and that the Constituent Assembly would have been the "only authority" capable of preventing the dividing up of the land (an assertion which will cause laughter throughout Russia, where everybody knows that the Soviets *alone* are recognised as authoritative institutions by the workers and peasants, while the Constituent Assembly has become the slogan of the Czecho-Slovaks and the landlords), Kautsky continues:

> One of the first decrees of the Soviet government declared that (1) all landlords' property in land is abolished immediately without compensation; (2) all landlords' estates, as well as all appanage, ministerial and church lands, with all their live and dead stock, with all their buildings and appurtenances, are placed at the disposal of the Township Land Committees of the County Soviets of Peasants' Deputies pending the solution of the land question by the Constituent Assembly.

Having quoted *only these two* clauses, Kautsky concludes;

> The reference to the Constituent Assembly has remained a dead letter. In point of fact, the peasants in the separate townships could do as they pleased with the land. (P. 4.)

Here you have an example of Kautsky's "criticism." Here you have a "scientific" work, which is more like a forgery. The German reader is induced to believe that the Bolsheviks capitulated before the peasantry on the question of private property on land! That the Bolsheviks permitted the peasants to act locally ("in the separate townships") in whatever way they pleased!

As a matter of fact, the decree that Kautsky quotes (the first decree, which was promulgated on November 8 [October 28] 1917),* consisted not of two, but of *five* clauses, *plus* eight clauses of an "Instruction" which, it was expressly stated, "must serve for guidance."

Clause 3 of the decree stated that the estates are transferred *"to the people,"* and that an "exact inventory of the whole of the confiscated property" must be drawn up and a "strict revolutionary watch" must be established over it. And the Instruction declares that "the right of private property in land is abolished forever," that "estates in a high degree of cultivation" are *"not subject to division,"*

* See "The Land Decree," *Selected Works,* Vol. VI.—*Ed.*

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and that "the entire agricultural stock, live and dead, of the confiscated estates is transferred to the exclusive use of the state or the commune, according to their size and importance, without compensation," and that "the whole of the land passes into the national land fund."

Then, simultaneously with the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (January 18 [5], 1918), the Third Congress of Soviets adopted a "Declaration of Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People" * which now forms a part of the Fundamental Law of the Soviet Republic. Article 2, par. 1 of this Declaration declares that "private property in land is abolished," and that "model estates and agricultural enterprises are proclaimed national property."

Hence, the reference to the Constituent Assembly did *not* remain a dead letter, because another national representative body, immeasurably more authoritative in the eyes of the peasants, undertook the solution of the agrarian question.

Again, on February 19 [6], 1918, the Land Socialisation Act was promulgated, which once again confirmed the abolition of all private property in land and placed the land and *all private stock* at the disposal of the Soviet authorities *under the control of the federal Soviet government.* Among the duties of the Soviet authorities in connection with the disposal of the land, the law prescribed:

> The development of collective farming as the more advantageous in respect of economy of labour and produce, at the expense of individual farming, with the view to the transition to socialist agricultural economy. (P. 11, § d.)

The same law, in establishing the principle of *equal* land tenure, replied to the fundamental question: "Who has the right to the use of the land?" in the following manner:

> Art. 20. Plots of land surface for public and private needs within the frontiers of the Russian Soviet Federal Republic may be used: A. For cultural and educational purposes, (1) by the state as represented by organs of the Soviet state (federal, regional, province, county, township and village), and (2) by public bodies (under the control, and with the consent, of the local Soviet authorities); B. For agricultural purposes: (3) by agricultural communes, (4) by agricultural co-operative associations, (5) by village communities, (6) by private families and persons. . . .

The reader will perceive that Kautsky has completely distorted the facts, and has given the German reader an absolutely false view

* See *Selected Works*, Vol. VI.—*Ed.*

of the agrarian policy and of the agrarian legislation of the proletarian state in Russia.

Kautsky was not even able to formulate the theoretically important fundamental questions. These questions are:

(1) Equal land tenure; (2) nationalisation of the land—the relation of these two measures to socialism in general, and to the transition from capitalism to communism in particular; (3) the collective cultivation of the soil as a transition stage from small, individual, parcelised farming to large-scale social farming; does the manner in which this question is dealt with in Soviet legislation meet the requirement of socialism?

On the first question it is necessary, first of all, to establish the following two main facts: (a) in weighing the experience of the 1905 Revolution (I may refer, for instance, to my work on the agrarian question in the first Russian Revolution),* the Bolsheviks pointed to the democratically progressive, to the democratically revolutionary, significance of the slogan: equal land tenure; and in 1917, *before* the October Revolution, they said this quite definitely.** (b) When adopting the Land Socialisation Act—the "spirit" of which is equal land tenure—the Bolsheviks most explicitly and definitely declared: This is not our idea; we do not agree with this slogan; but we think it our duty to pass it because it is demanded by the overwhelming majority of the peasants.*** And the majority of the toilers must discard these ideas and demands *themselves;* such demands could not be "abolished" or "skipped over." We, the Bolsheviks, will *help* the peasantry to discard petty-bourgeois slogans, to *pass* from them as quickly and as painlessly as possible to socialist demands.

A Marxist theoretician who wanted to help the working class revolution by his scientific analysis should have answered the question: First; is it true that the idea of equal land tenure is of democratically revolutionary significance, significant in that it carries the *bourgeois* democratic revolution to its logical end? Secondly; did the Bolsheviks act correctly in carrying through by their votes (and by observing most loyally) the petty-bourgeois equal tenure law?

* See *Selected Works*, Vol. III.—*Ed.*

** See "Peasants and Workers," *Selected Works*, Vol. VI.—*Ed.*

*** See "Report on the Land, November 8 (October 26), 1917" and "The Alliance of the Workers With the Toiling and Exploited Peasants," *Selected Works*, Vol. VI.—*Ed.*

Kautsky was not even able to *perceive* the theoretical significance of the question!

Kautsky will never be able to refute the view that equal land tenure has a progressive and revolutionary significance in the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Such a revolution cannot go beyond this. On reaching this limit it *clearly*, *quickly* and *easily* reveals to the masses the *inadequacy* of bourgeois-democratic solutions and the necessity of proceeding beyond their limits, of passing on to *socialism*.

Having overthrown tsarism and landlordism, the peasantry dreamed of equal land tenure, and no power on earth could have prevented the peasantry, which had been freed from landlordism and from the *bourgeois* parliamentary republican state, from realising this dream. The proletarians said to the peasants: We shall help you to reach "ideal" capitalism, for equal land tenure is the idealisation of capitalism from the point of view of the small producer. At the same time we will prove to you its inadequacy and the necessity of passing to the social cultivation of the soil.

It would have been interesting to see Kautsky attempt to prove that *this* leadership of the peasant struggle by the proletariat was wrong.

But Kautsky preferred to evade this question altogether.

Moreover, Kautsky deliberately deceived his German readers by withholding from them the fact that in its Land Law the Soviet government gave *direct preference* to communes and co-operative associations by putting them in the forefront.

With the peasantry to the end of the bourgeois democratic revolution; and with the poorest, the proletarian and semi-proletarian section of the peasantry, *forward* to the socialist revolution! Such has been the policy of the Bolsheviks, and such is the only Marxian policy.

But Kautsky is all muddled up and cannot formulate a single question! On the one hand, he *dare not* say that the proletarians should have parted company with the peasantry on the question of equal land tenure because he realises that such a rupture would have been absurd (and moreover, in 1905, when he was not yet a renegade, he explicitly advocated an alliance between the workers and peasants as a condition of the victory of the revolution). On the other hand, he sympathetically quotes the liberal platitudes of the Menshevik Maslov, who "proves" that petty-bourgeois equal land

tenure is utopian and reactionary *from the point of view of socialism*, but he fails to point out the progressive and revolutionary character of the petty-bourgeois struggle for equality and equal tenure *from the point of view* of a *bourgeois-democratic revolution.*

Kautsky is in a hopeless muddle: note that he (in 1918) *insists* on the *bourgois* character of the Russian revolution. He (in 1918) says peremptorily: "Don't go beyond these limits! And yet this very same Kautsky sees "something socialistic" (for a bourgeois revolution) in the *petty-bourgeois* reform of renting out small plots of land to the *poor* peasants *(i.e.,* the approximation to equal land tenure)!

Let those understand this who can!

In addition to all this, Kautsky displays a philistine inability to take into account the real policy of a definite political party. He quotes the *phrases* of the Menshevik Maslov and *refuses to see the real policy* the Menshevik Party pursued in 1917, when, in "coalition" with landlords and Cadets, they actually advocated a *liberal agrarian reform and compromise with the landlords* (proof: the arrest of members of the Land Committees and S. Maslov's Land Bill).

Kautsky failed to realise that P. Maslov's phrases about the reactionary and utopian character of petty-bourgeois equality are really a screen to conceal the Menshevik policy of *compromise* between the peasants and the landlords *(i.e.,* of helping the landlords to deceive the peasants), instead of the revolutionary overthrow of the landlords by the peasants.

What a Marxist Kautsky is!

It was the Bolsheviks who strictly took into account the difference between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution: by carrying the first to its logical end they opened the door for passing to the second. This was the only policy that was revolutionary and Marxian.

It is useless for Kautsky to repeat the old liberal platitudes:

> The small peasants have never passed to collective production under the influence of theoretical convictions. (P. 50.)

How smart!

But never before have the small peasants of a large country been under the influence of a proletarian state!

Never before have the small peasants engaged in an open class

struggle extending into civil war between the poorest peasants and rich peasants, with the proletarian state giving propagandist, political, economic and military support to the poor.

Never before have the profiteers and the rich amassed such wealth out of war, while the masses of the peasantry have been so utterly ruined.

Kautsky simply reiterates what is old; chews the old cud, and is afraid to ponder over the new tasks of the proletarian dictatorship.

But what, dear Kautsky, if the peasants *lack implements* for small production, and the proletarian state helps them to obtain agricultural machinery for the collective cultivation of the soil—is that a "theoretical conviction"?

We will now pass to the question of the nationalisation of the land. Our Populists, including all the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, deny that the measure we have adopted is the nationalisation of the land. They are theoretically wrong. In so far as we remain within the framework of commodity production and capitalism, the abolition of private property in land is the nationalisation of the land.

The term "socialisation" merely expresses a trend, a desire, the preparation for the transition to socialism.

What should be the attitude of Marxists towards the nationalisation of the land?

Here, too, Kautsky is unable even to formulate the theoretical question, or, what is worse, he deliberately evades it; although one knows from Russian literature that Kautsky is aware of the old controversies among Russian Marxists on the question of nationalisation or municipalisation *(i.e.,* the transfer of the large estates to the local authorities), or division of the land.

Kautsky's assertion that the transfer of the large estates to the state and their renting out in small plots to poor peasants would have achieved something "socialistic" is simply a mockery of Marxism. We have said already that there was nothing socialistic about it. But this is not all; it would not even carry the *bourgeois-democratic* revolution to its logical end.

Kautsky's great misfortune is that he placed his trust in the Mensheviks. Hence the curious position that while insisting on the bourgeois character of our revolution and reproaching the Bolsheviks for taking it into their heads to proceed to socialism, he himself proposes a *liberal* reform in the guise of socialism *without carrying*

this reform to the point of clearing away all the survivals of mediævalism in agrarian relationships! The arguments of Kautsky and of his Menshevik advisers amount to a defence of the liberal bourgeoisie which fears revolution, instead of a defence of consistent bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Indeed, why should only the large estates, and not all the land, be transformed into state property? By that the liberal bourgeoisie would attain the maximum preservation of the old conditions *(i.e.,* the least consistency in revolution), and the maximum facility for a return to the old conditions. The radical bourgeoisie, *i.e.,* the bourgeoisie that carries the bourgeois revolution to the end, demands *the nationalisation of the land.*

Kautsky, who in the dim and distant past, some twenty years ago, wrote an excellent Marxian work on the agrarian question,* cannot but know Marx's references to the fact that land nationalisation is precisely a *consistent* slogan of the *bourgeoisie.* Kautsky cannot but be aware of the controversy between Marx and Rodbertus, and Marx's remarkable passages in his "Theories of Surplus Value," in which the revolutionary significance—in the bourgeois-democratic sense—of land nationalisation is explained with particular clarity.

The Menshevik, P. Maslov, whom unfortunately for himself Kautsky chose as an adviser, denied that the Russian peasants would agree to the nationalisation of all the land (including the peasants' lands). To a certain extent, this view of Maslov's could be connected with his "original" theory (which merely repeats the bourgeois critics of Marx), *viz.,* his repudiation of absolute rent and his recognition of the "law" (or "fact," as Maslov expressed it) of the "diminishing fertility of the soil."

In point of fact, however, even the Revolution of 1905 revealed that the overwhelming majority of the peasants in Russia, members of village communes as well as individual peasant proprietors, were in favour of the nationalisation of all the land. The Revolution of 1917 confirmed this, and after the assumption of power by the proletariat, this was done. The Bolsheviks remained loyal to Marxism and never tried (in spite of Kautsky, who without a shadow of evidence, accuses us of doing so) to "skip over" the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The Bolsheviks, first of all, helped the most radical, most revolutionary of the bourgeois-democratic

* *Die Agrarfrage,* 1899.—*Ed.*

ideologists of the peasantry, those who stood closest to the proletariat, namely, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, to carry out what was practically the nationalisation of the land. On October 26 (November 8), 1917, *i.e.*, on the very first day of the proletarian socialist revolution, private ownership in land was abolished in Russia.

This laid the foundation, the most perfect from the point of view of the development of capitalism (Kautsky cannot deny this without breaking with Marx), and at the same time created an agrarian system which is *most flexible* from the point of view of the transition to socialism. From the bourgeois-democratic point of view, the revolutionary peasantry *could not go any further* in Russia: there can be nothing more "ideal" from this point of view, nothing more "radical" (from this same point of view), than the nationalisation of the land and equal land tenure. It was the Bolsheviks, and the Bolsheviks alone, who, thanks to the victory of the *proletarian* revolution, helped the peasantry to carry the bourgeois-democratic revolution *really* to its end. And this was the only way in which they could do the utmost to facilitate and accelerate the transition to the socialist revolution.

One can judge from this what an incredible muddle Kautsky offers to his readers by accusing the Bolsheviks of failing to understand the bourgeois character of the revolution, and by himself betraying such a wide departure from Marxism that he says nothing about the nationalisation of the land and proposes the least revolutionary (even from the bourgeois point of view) liberal agrarian reform as something "socialistic."

We have now come to the third question formulated above, namely, to what extent has the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia taken into account the necessity of passing to the social cultivation of the soil? Here again, Kautsky commits something in the nature of a forgery: he quotes only the "theses" of one Bolshevik * which speak of the task of passing to the collective cultivation of the soil. After quoting one of these theses, our "theoretician" triumphantly exclaims:

> Unfortunately, a task is not fulfilled by the fact that it is called a task. For the time being, collective farming in Russia is doomed to remain on paper

* The theses, "The Socialist Revolution and the Tasks of the Proletariat During Its Dictatorship in Russia," were written by Bukharin in the summer of 1918 and distributed by the Spartacus League in Germany.—*Ed.*

only. Never have the small peasants passed to collective production under the influence of theoretical convictions. (P. 50.)

Never has a literary swindle been perpetrated equal to that to which Kautsky stooped. He quotes the "theses," but says nothing about the *law* passed by the Soviet government. He talks about "theoretical convictions," but says nothing about the proletarian state which holds in its hands the factories and goods! All that Kautsky, the Marxist, wrote in 1899 in his *Agrarian Question*, about the means at the disposal of the proletarian state to effect the gradual transition of the small peasants to socialism, has been forgotten by the renegade Kautsky in 1918.

Of course, a few hundred state-supported agricultural communes and Soviet farms (large estates cultivated by associations of workers, on account of the state) is very little; but can Kautsky's ignoring of this fact be called "criticism"?

The nationalisation of the land that was carried out in Russia by the proletarian dictatorship provided the highest guarantees for carrying the bourgeois-democratic revolution to its end, even in the event of a victory of the counter-revolution causing a reversion from land nationalisation to land division (I examined this possibility in a pamphlet on the agrarian programme of the Marxists in the 1905 Revolution).* In addition, the nationalisation of the land has given the proletarian state the maximum opportunity for passing to socialism in agriculture.

To sum up, Kautsky has presented us with a theoretical hodgepodge which is a complete renunciation of Marxism, and with a practical policy of flunkeyism to the bourgeoisie and its reformism. A fine critique, indeed!

Kautsky begins his "economic analysis" of industry with the following magnificent argument:

Russia has a large-scale capitalist industry. Cannot a socialist system of production be built up on this foundation?

One would have thought so if socialism meant that the workers of the various factories and mines appropriated these for themselves in order to carry on production at each factory separately. . . . This very day, August 5, as I am writing these lines [Kautsky adds], Moscow reports a speech delivered by Lenin on August 2, in which he is stated to have declared: "The workers are firmly holding the factories in their hands, and the peasants will not

* *The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution of 1905-1907*, written in 1907.—*Ed.*

restore the land to the landlords." Hitherto, the slogan: The factories to the workers, and the land to the peasants, has been an Anarcho-Syndicalist slogan and not a Social-Democratic slogan. (Pp. 52-53.)

I have quoted this passage in full in order that the Russian workers, who formerly quite rightly respected Kautsky, may see for themselves the methods employed by a deserter to the bourgeois camp.

Just think: On August 5, when numerous decrees on the nationalisation of factories in Russia had been issued—not a single factory was "appropriated by the workers"; all were converted into the property of the Republic—on August 5, Kautsky, on the strength of an obviously dishonest interpretation of a sentence in my speech, tries to make the German readers believe that in Russia the factories were handed over to individual workers! And after that Kautsky, at great length, chews the cud about it being wrong to hand over the factories individually to the workers!

This is not criticism, it is the trick of a lackey to the bourgeoisie, whom the capitalists hire to libel the workers' revolution.

The factories must be handed over to the state, or to the municipalities, or the co-operative societies, says Kautsky, over and over again, and finally adds: "This is what they are now trying to do in Russia. . . ."

What does "now" mean? In August? Was not Kautsky able to commission his friend, Stein, or Axelrod, or any of the other friends of the Russian bourgeoisie, to translate at least one of the decrees on the factories?

To what extent this has been done, cannot yet be determined. At all events, this aspect of the activity of the Soviet Republic is of the greatest interest for us, but it still remains entirely shrouded in darkness. There is no lack of decrees . . . [this is why Kautsky ignores their *contents*, or conceals them from his readers!] there is no reliable information as to the effect of these decrees. Socialist production is impossible without all-round, detailed, reliable and rapidly informing statistics. The Soviet Republic cannot possibly have created such statistics yet. What we learn about its economic activities is highly contradictory and cannot be verified. This, too, is a result of the dictatorship and the suppression of democracy. There is no freedom of the press, or of speech. (P. 53.)

This is how history is written! Had there been "freedom of the press" for the capitalists and Dutovs,* Kautsky would have received information about the factories being handed over to the workers.

* Dutov was a counter-revolutionary, tsarist general.—*Ed.*

This above class, "serious savant" is really magnificent! Kautsky refuses to touch a single one of the countless facts which show that the factories are being handed over to the Republic *only*, and that they are managed by the Supreme Economic Council, an organ of Soviet government, which is constituted mainly of workers elected by the trade unions. With the obstinacy of the "man in the muffler," * he goes on repeating one thing: Give me peaceful democracy, without civil war, without a dictatorship, with good statistics (the Soviet Republic has created a statistical organisation, in which the best statistical authorities in Russia are employed, but, of course, an ideal system of statistics cannot be created so quickly); in a word give me a revolution without revolution, without fierce struggle, without violence! This is what Kautsky wants. It is the same as asking for strikes without the workers and employers displaying furious passion. What is the difference between this socialist and a common liberal bureaucrat?

And so, relying upon such "factual material," *i.e.*, deliberately and contemptuously ignoring innumerable facts, Kautsky concludes:

> It is doubtful whether the Russian proletariat has obtained under the Soviet Republic more, in the sense of real practical acquisitions and not of mere decrees, than it would have obtained under the Constituent Assembly, in which, as in the Soviets, socialists, although of a different colour, would have predominated. (P. 58.)

A gem, is it not? We would advise the worshippers of Kautsky to circulate this utterance as widely as possible among the Russian workers, because Kautsky could not have provided better material for gauging his political degradation. Comrades and workers, Kerensky was also a "socialist," but of a "different colour"! Kautsky, the historian, is satisfied with the title which the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks "appropriated" to themselves; Kautsky, the historian, refuses even to listen to the facts which loudly proclaim that under Kerensky, the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries supported the imperialist policy and marauding practices of the bourgeoisie; he is discreetly silent about the fact that the majority in the Constituent Assembly consisted of these "heroes" of the imperialist war and bourgeois dictatorship. And this is called an "economic analysis"!

* A character in a story by Chekhov, typifying the timid, conservative, petty bureaucrat.—*Ed.*

In conclusion, let me quote another sample of that "economic analysis":

> After an existence of nine months the Soviet Republic, instead of spreading general well-being, has been obliged to explain why there is general distress. (P. 41.)

We are accustomed to hear such arguments from the lips of the Cadets. All the flunkeys of the bourgeoisie in Russia argue in this way. They all want to see general well-being brought about in nine months after four years' ruinous war and in the midst of sabotage and numerous insurrections of the bourgeoisie, aided and abetted by foreign capital! In actual practice, there is absolutely no difference whatever, not a shade of difference between Kautsky and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. His sentimental speeches cloaked in the guise of "socialism" only repeat what the Kornilovists, the Dutovs and the Krasnovs in Russia say bluntly, straightforwardly and without embellishments.

The above lines were written November 9, 1918. Late the same night news was received from Germany announcing the beginning of a victorious revolution, at first at Kiel and other northern towns and ports, where power had passed into the hands of Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and then in Berlin, where power has also passed into the hands of the Soviet.

The conclusion which I intended to write on Kautsky's pamphlet and on the proletarian revolution is now superfluous.

November 10, 1918.

APPENDIX I

THESES ON THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY *

1. THE demand for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly was a perfectly legitimate part of the programme of revolutionary Social-Democracy, because in a bourgeois republic the Constituent Assembly represents the highest form of democracy, and because the imperialist republic, with Kerensky at its head, in creating a parliament, was preparing to manipulate the elections, and to commit a number of infractions of democracy.

2. While demanding the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social-Democracy has, from the very beginning of the Revolution of 1917, repeatedly emphasised that a republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the ordinary bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly.

3. For the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist order, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, a republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies is not only the form of a higher type of democratic institution (as compared with the ordinary bourgeois republic crowned with a Constituent Assembly) but it is also the only form capable of securing the most painless transition to socialism.

4. The convocation of a Constituent Assembly in our revolution on the basis of lists submitted at the end (middle) of October, 1917, is taking place amidst conditions which preclude the possibility of the elections to this Constituent Assembly faithfully expressing the will of the people in general and of the toiling masses in particular.

5. First, proportional representation results in faithful expression of the will of the people only when the party lists correspond to the real division among the people actually in accordance with the party groupings which are reflected in those lists. Here, however, as is well known, the party which between May and October had the largest number of adherents among the people, and especially among the peasantry, *viz.*, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, presented joint lists for the Constituent Assembly at the end

* Reprinted from *Pravda*, January 8, 1918.

(middle) of October, 1917, but split after the elections to the Constituent Assembly, before it was convened.

For this reason, there is not, nor can there be, even formal correlation between the will of the mass of the electors and the composition of the Constituent Assembly.

6. Second, a still more important, not formal, nor legal, but a social-economic class source of the discrepancy between the will of the people and, especially, of the toiling classes, on the one hand, and the composition of the Constituent Assembly, on the other, is the circumstance that the elections to the Constituent Assembly took place at a time when the overwhelming majority of the people could not yet know the whole extent and significance of the October Soviet proletarian and peasants' revolution, which began on November 7 (October 25), 1917, *i.e.*, after the lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly had been submitted.

7. The October Revolution, which captured power for the Soviets, and which wrested political domination from the hands of the bourgeoisie and transferred it to the hands of the proletariat and poorest peasantry, is passing, under our very eyes, through consecutive stages of development.

8. It began with the victory of November 6 and 7 (October 24 and 25) in the capital, when the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the vanguard of the proletarians, and of, politically, the most active section of the peasantry, gave a majority to the Bolshevik Party and put it in power.

9. Then, in the course of November and December, the revolution spread to the entire army and the peasantry, and manifested itself, first of all, in the dismissal and re-election of the leading bodies (army committees, province and peasant committees, the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Council of Peasants' Deputies, etc.), which expressed the superseded compromising stage of the revolution, its bourgeois and not proletarian stage, and which were inevitably bound to disappear as a result of the pressure of the lower and broader popular masses.

10. This mighty movement of the exploited masses for the reorganisation of the leading bodies of their organisations has really not yet ended, in the middle of December 1917 and the Railwaymen's Congress, which is still in session, represents one of its stages.

11. Hence, the grouping of the class forces in Russia in the

course of the class struggle is in fact assuming an essentially different form in November and December 1917 from the one that could be reflected in the party lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly that were submitted in the middle of October 1917.

12. Recent events in the Ukraine (partly also in Finland and White Russia, as well as in the Caucasus) similarly reveal a regrouping of the class forces which is taking place in the process of the struggle between the bourgeois nationalism of the Ukrainian Rada, the Finnish Diet, etc., on the one hand, and the Soviet power, the proletarian and peasant revolution in each of these national republics, on the other.

13. Lastly, the civil war which was started by the counter-revolutionary rebellion of the Cadet-Kaledinists against the Soviet authorities, against the workers' and peasants' government, has finally brought the class struggle to an issue and has destroyed all chances of settling the very acute problems which history has set before the peoples of Russia, and more particularly before the Russian working class and peasantry in a formal democratic way.

14. Only the complete victory of the workers and peasants over the bourgeois and landlord rebellion (which found expression in the Cadet-Kaledinist movement), only the ruthless military suppression of this rebellion of the slave-owners can really safeguard the proletarian and peasant revolution. The course of events and the development of the class struggle in the revolution has resulted in the slogan "All power to the Constituent Assembly"—which ignores the gains of the workers' and peasants' revolution, which ignores the Soviet power, which ignores the decisions of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, of the Second All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies, etc.—becoming in fact the slogan of the Cadets and the Kaledinists, and of their abettors. It is becoming clear to the entire people that this slogan means in fact a struggle for the overthrow of the Soviet power, and that the Constituent Assembly, if it disagreed with the Soviet power, would inevitably be doomed to political death.

15. Among the particularly acute problems of national life is the problem of peace. A real revolutionary struggle for peace was commenced in Russia only after the victory of the revolution of November 7 (October 25), and the first-fruits of this victory were the publication of the secret treaties, the conclusion of an armistice,

and the beginning of open negotiations for a general peace without annexations and indemities.

Only now have the broad mass of the people an opportunity of seeing in operation a policy of revolutionary struggle for peace, and of studying its results.

At the time of the elections to the Constituent Assembly the masses of the people had no such opportunity.

Clearly, then, from this point of view also, a discrepancy between the composition of the Constituent Assembly and the real will of the people on the question of terminating the war is also inevitable.

16. The result of all the above mentioned circumstances is the fact that the Constituent Assembly, elected according to party lists compiled before the proletarian and peasant revolution and under the rule of the bourgeoisie, must inevitably clash with the will and interests of the toiling and exploited classes who on November 7 (October 25) began the socialist revolution against the bourgeoisie. Naturally, the interests of this revolution are higher than the formal rights of the Constituent Assembly, even if those formal rights were not undermined by the absence in the Constituent Assembly Law of a provision recognising the right of the people to recall and to re-elect its deputies at any moment.

17. Every attempt, direct or indirect, to regard the question of the Constituent Assembly from the formal, legal point of view, within the limits of ordinary bourgeois democracy, and ignoring the class struggle and civil war, is treachery to the cause of the proletariat, and is the adoption of the bourgeois point of view. It is the bounden duty of revolutionary Social-Democrats to warn all and sundry against this error, into which a few Bolshevik leaders, who have not been able to appreciate the significance of the October uprising and the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat, have fallen.

18. The only chance of securing a painless solution of the crisis which has arisen as a result of the discrepancy between the elections to the Constituent Assembly and the will of the people, as well as the interests of the toiling and exploited classes, is to enable the people as early as possible, to exercise the right to re-elect the members of the Constituent Assembly, and for the Constituent Assembly to associate itself with the decision adopted by the Central Executive Committee concerning this re-election, for the Constituent Assembly to proclaim unreservedly that it recognises the Soviet power, the

Soviet revolution, its policy on the questions of peace, the land and workers' control, and that it resolutely joins the camp of the enemies of the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolution.

19. Unless these conditions are created the crisis in connection with the Constituent Assembly can be settled only in a revolutionary way, by the most energetic, rapid, firm and determined revolutionary measures on the part of the Soviet power against the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolution, no matter what slogans and institutions (even membership of the Constituent Assembly) this counter-revolution may screen itself with. Every attempt to tie the hands of the Soviet power in this struggle would be tantamount to aiding and abetting the counter-revolution.

APPENDIX II

Vandervelde's New Book on the State

It was not until I had finished reading Kautsky's book that Vandervelde's book, *Socialism Versus the State* (Paris, 1918), came into my hands. A comparison of the two books involuntarily suggests itself. Kautsky is the theoretical leader of the Second International (1889-1914), while Vandervelde, in his capacity of President of the International Socialist Bureau, is its official representative. Both represent the complete bankruptcy of the Second International, and both with the skill of experienced journalists "cleverly" conceal this bankruptcy and their own bankruptcy and desertion to the bourgeoisie with Marxian catchwords. One gives us a striking example of German opportunism, ponderous, academic, grossly falsifying Marxism by cutting away from it all that is unacceptable to the bourgeoisie. The other is typical of the Latin—to a certain extent, one may say, West European (that is, west of Germany) species of prevailing opportunism, which is more flexible, less ponderous, and which falsifies Marxism by a similar method, but in a more subtle manner.

Both radically distort Marx's tenets on the state and on the dictatorship of the proletariat; Vandervelde deals more with the state, while Kautsky deals more with dictatorship. Both obscure the very close and inseparable connection that exists between the two subjects. Both are revolutionaries and Marxists in words, but are renegades in practice, who exert all their efforts to *dissociate themselves* from revolution. Neither of them betray even a trace of what permeates all the works of Marx and Engels, and of what distinguishes socialism from a bourgeois caricature of it, namely, the elucidation of the tasks of revolution as *distinct* from the tasks of reform, the elucidation of revolutionary tactics as distinct from reformist tactics, and the elucidation of the rôle of the proletariat in the *abolition* of the system of wage slavery as distinct from the rôle of the proletariat of the "Great Powers" in sharing with the bourgeoisie a particle of the latter's imperialist super-profits and super-booty.

We will quote a few of the most important arguments of Vandervelde in support of this appraisal.

Like Kautsky, Vandervelde quotes Marx and Engels with great zeal, and like Kautsky, Vandervelde quotes from Marx and Engels everything *except* what is disagreeable to the bourgeoisie and what distinguishes a revolutionary from a reformist. He has got plenty to say about the conquest of political power by the proletariat, since practice has long ago enclosed this within strictly parliamentary limits. But *not a single word* does he say about the fact that after the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels found it necessary to supplement the, in part, obsolete *Communist Manifesto* with an elucidation of the truth that the working class cannot simply take possession of the ready-made state machine, but must *smash* it.* Vandervelde, like Kautsky, as if by agreement, ignores what is most essential in the *experience* of the proletarian revolution, precisely that which distinguishes the proletarian revolution from bourgeois reforms.

Like Kautsky, Vandervelde also speaks about the dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to repudiate it. Kautsky did it by gross falsifications, while Vandervelde does it in a more subtle way. In one of the sections of his book, section 4, "The Conquest of Political Power by the Proletariat," he devotes sub-section "b" to the question of the collective dictatorship of the proletariat, "quotes" Marx and Engels (I repeat, omitting all references to the main point, namely, the *smashing* of the old, bourgeois-democratic state machine), and concludes:

> In socialist circles, the social revolution is commonly conceived in the following manner: a new Commune, this time victorious, not in one centre, but in all the main centres of the capitalist world.
>
> A hypothesis, but a hypothesis which has nothing improbable about it at a time when it is becoming evident that the post-war period will in many countries see unprecedented class conflicts and social convulsions.
>
> But if the failure of the Paris Commune, not to speak of the difficulties of the Russian Revolution, proves anything at all, it is that it is impossible to put an end to the capitalist system of society until the proletariat has been sufficiently trained to make proper use of the power which force of certain circumstances may put into its hands. (P. 73.)

And nothing more on the essence of the question!

Such are the leaders and representatives of the Second International! In 1912 they signed the Basel Manifesto, which openly

* See *Civil War in France*, and Preface written by Marx and Engels to the 1872 edition of the *Communist Manifesto*.—*Ed.*

speaks of the connection the very war which broke out in 1914 has with the proletarian revolution, and actually *threatens* to bring it about; and when the war actually broke out and a revolutionary situation was created the Kautskys and Vanderveldes began to dissociate themselves from revolution. A revolution of the Paris Commune type, don't you see, is only an improbable hypothesis! This is quite analogous to Kautsky's arguments about the possible rôle of the Soviets in Europe.

But this is just the argument of the ordinary educated *liberal*, who will, no doubt, agree that a new Commune is "not improbable," that the Soviets have a great future before them, etc. The proletarian revolutionary differs from the liberal in that he, as a theoretician, analyses the new state significance of the Commune and the Soviets. Vandervelde, however, *says nothing* about what Marx and Engels said on the subject in detail in their analyses of the experience of the Paris Commune.

As a practical politician, a Marxist should have made it clear that only traitors to socialism can evade the task of explaining the necessity of a proletarian revolution (of the Commune, of the Soviet, or perhaps of some other type), of explaining the necessity of preparing for it, of propagating revolution among the masses, of refuting the petty-bourgeois democratic prejudices against it, etc.

But neither Kautsky nor Vandervelde does anything of the sort, because they themselves are traitors to socialism who only want to maintain their reputation as socialists and Marxists among the workers.

Take the theoretical formulation of the question.

The state, even in a democratic republic, is nothing more nor less than a machine for the suppression of one class by another. Kautsky is familiar with this axiom, admits it, agrees with it, but evades the fundamental question as to what class, and for what reasons and by what means the proletariat ought to suppress, when it establishes the proletarian state.

Vandervelde is familiar with, and admits, agrees with and quotes the fundamental propositions of Marxism (p. 72 of his book), but he does not say a single word on the highly unpleasant (for the capitalist) *subject of the suppression of the resistance of the exploiters!*

Both Vandervelde and Kautsky have completely evaded this "unpleasant" subject. Therein lies their renegacy.

Like Kautsky, Vandervelde is a past master in the art of substituting eclecticism for dialectics. "On the one hand, it is so but on the other hand, it isn't" and so forth. On the one hand, the term state means "the nation as a whole" (see Littre's *Dictionary*—certainly a learned work, which Vandervelde quotes, *cf.* p. 87); on the other hand, the term state may mean the "government" (*ibid.*). Vandervelde quotes this learned platitude with approval, *side by side* with the quotations from Marx. "The Marxian meaning of the term state differs from the ordinary meaning," writes Vandervelde. Hence "misunderstandings" may arise as a result of this.

Marx and Engels regard the state not as the state in the broad sense, not a state as an organ of guidance, as the representative of the general interests of society (*interets generaux de la société*). It is the state—as the organ of political power, the state—as the organ of authority, the state—as the instrument of the domination of one class over another. (Pp. 75-77.)

Marx and Engels speak about the destruction of the state in regard to the latter interpretation of the state. . . .

Propositions of too absolute a character run the risk of being inexact. There are many transitional stages between the capitalist state which is based on the exclusive domination of one class and the proletarian state, the aim of which is to abolish all classes. (P. 156.)

This is an example of Vandervelde's "style" which is only slightly different from that of Kautsky, but which, in essence, is identical with it. Dialectics repudiates absolute truths: it explains the successive change of opposites and the significance of crises in history. The eclectic does not want propositions that are "too absolute," because he wants to push forward his philistine desire to substitute "*transitional stages*" for revolution.

Kautsky and Vandervelde say nothing about the fact that the transition stage between the state as an organ of the domination of the capitalist class, and the state as an organ of the domination of the proletariat, is *revolution,* which means *overthrowing* the bourgeoisie and *breaking up, smashing* its state machine.

Kautsky and Vandervelde obscure the fact that the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie must give way to the dictatorship of one class, the proletariat, and that the "transition stages" of the revolution will be followed by the "transition stages" of the gradual withering away of the proletarian state.

Therein lies their political renegacy.

Therein, theoretically, philosophically, lies their substitution of eclecticism and sophistry for dialectics. Dialectics is concrete and

revolutionary and distinguishes between the "transition" from the dictatorship of one class to the dictatorship of another, and the "transition" from the democratic proletarian state to the non-state ("the withering away of the state"). To please the bourgeoisie the eclecticism and sophistry of the Kautskys and the Vanderveldes blur all that is concrete and precise in the class struggle and advance the general concept "transition," under which they can hide (and *nine-tenths* of the official Social-Democrats of our time *do hide*) their renunciation of revolution.

As an eclecticist and sophist Vandervelde is more skilful and more subtle than Kautsky, because the phrase: "transition from the state in the narrow sense to the state in the broad sense," can serve as a means of evading all the problems of revolution, all the differences between revolution and reform, and even the difference between the Marxist and the liberal. For what educated European bourgeois would think of "in general" denying "transition stages" in this "general" sense?

Vandervelde writes:

> I agree with Jules Guesde that it is impossible to socialise the means of production and exchange without first fulfilling the following two condition:
> (1) The transformation of the present state as the organ of domination of one class over another, into what Menger calls a people's labour state, by the conquest of political power by the proletariat;
> (2) separation of the state as an organ of authority from the state as an organ of guidance, or, to use the expression of Saint Simon, of the government of men from the administration of things. (P. 89.)

Vandervelde puts the above in italics in order to emphasise the importance of these propositions. But this is sheer eclectical hodgepodge, a complete rupture with Marxism! The so-called "people's labour state" is just a paraphrase of the old "free people's state,"[13] which the German Social-Democrats paraded in the 1870's and which Engels brands as an absurdity. The term "people's labour state" is worthy of a petty-bourgeois democrat (like our Left Socialist-Revolutionaries), a phrase which substitutes extra-class concepts for class concepts. Vandervelde places the conquest of state power by the *proletariat* (by one class) in juxtaposition with the "people's" state and fails to see the muddle he has created. Kautsky, with his "pure democracy," creates the same muddle and betrays the same anti-revolutionary, philistine disregard of the tasks of the class revolution, of the *class*, the proletarian dictatorship, of the *class* (proletarian) state.

Further, the government of men will disappear and give way to the administration of things only when the state *as such* disappears. With this relatively distant future Vandervelde obscures, pushes into the background, the tasks of *to-morrow, viz.*, the *overthrow* of the bourgeoisie.

This trick is also equivalent to subserviency to the liberal bourgeoisie. The liberal is willing to talk about what will happen when it will not be necessary to govern men. Why not indulge in such innocent dreams? But I will say nothing about the proletariat having to crush the bourgeoisie's resistance to its expropriation. The class interests of the bourgeoisie demand this.

Socialism versus the state. This is Vandervelde's bow to the proletariat. It is not difficult to make a bow; every "democratic" politician can make a bow to his electors. And under cover of a "bow" an anti-revolutionary and anti-proletarian policy is pursued.

Vandervelde extensively paraphrases Ostrogorsky to show what an amount of deceit, violence, corruption, mendacity, hypocrisy, and oppression of the poor is hidden under the civilised, polished, and perfumed exterior of modern bourgeois democracy; but he draws no conclusion from this. He fails to observe that bourgeois democracy suppresses the toiling and exploited masses, and that *proletarian democracy* will have to *suppress the bourgeoisie.* Kautsky and Vandervelde are completely blind to this. The class interests of the bourgeoisie, in the wake of which these petty-bourgeois traitors to Marxism are floundering, *demand* the evasion of this question, that it be passed over in silence, or that the necessity of such suppression be directly denied.

Petty-bourgeois eclecticism *versus* Marxism, sophistry *versus* dialectics, philistine reformism *versus* proletarian revolution—such should have been the title of Vandervelde's book.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. Reference is here made to the Portuguese and Spanish Jesuits who settled in South America in the sixteenth century and forced the native Indians to work for them as serfs.—p. 25.

2. According to the law of June 16, 1907, elections in certain provinces were so conducted that workers' sections were organised into special election districts, which enabled the workers to elect their candidates.—p. 28.

3. The Soviets of Workers' Deputies came into being during the Russian Revolution of 1905. During the general strike many of these Soviets arose out of the local strike committees.—p. 39.

4. The Democratic Conference was called by Kerensky to bolster up the Provisional Government after the Kornilov affair. It was held September 27-October 5, with the representatives of the Soviets playing a very unimportant rôle.—p. 51.

5. The counter-revolutionary government of Thiers, which established itself at Versailles during the Paris Commune, made an alliance with the Prussian army surrounding Paris in order to crush the Commune, and accepted the peace terms dictated by Bismarck.—p. 53.

6. General Dutov, a Cossack leader, organised a counter-revolutionary army in the Volga and Ural regions in 1918-1919; General Krasnov led the counter-revolutionary struggle in 1918 on the Don; Czechoslovak war prisoners in Russia were utilised by England and France as a counter-revolutionary army in Siberia in 1918.—p. 54.

7. The conference of Socialist internationalists held at Zimmerwald, Switzerland, in 1915, which was attended by many Centrist elements, and at which the Russian Bolsheviks crystallised a Left, revolutionary wing.—p. 61.

8. During the French Revolution, the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, led by the Jacobins, was forced to organise a new army under a new, democratic leadership, which included political representatives of the central government, since the old army was led by representatives of the feudal-monarchical interests who were naturally opposed to the purposes of the Revolution.—p. 64.

9. The Spartacus League, named after the leader of the uprising of Roman slaves (73-71 B.C.), was an illegal organisation of revolutionary Socialists, organised by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, etc.; it conducted a struggle against the imperialist war as well as against the social-patriotic leadership of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany and was the forerunner of the Communist Party of Germany.—p. 70.

10. The occupation of Finland, Latvia, Esthonia and Ukraine by German military forces at the beginning of 1918. In the first three countries the German army aided the bourgeoisie and the landlords to crush the victorious revolutionary movement, and in the Ukraine it helped the counter-revolutionary nationalists to defeat for a time the young Soviet power.—p. 71.

11. The Land Committees were organised, according to the government decree of May 4, 1917, throughout the country to collect material on the question of land reform for the Constituent Assembly. A spontaneous peasant movement developed when the peasants failed to receive land as promised, with members of the Land Committees, who in many cases led the movement, being arrested and imprisoned.—p. 81.

12. The Committees of the Poor were organised among the peasants as the result of a decree of the Soviet government of July 11, 1918. These committees led in the struggles against the rich peasants (kulaks), unified the poor peasants and aided in establishing control over village Soviets by representatives of the poor and middle peasants.—p. 82.

13. The demand for this type of a state was included in the programme of the German Social-Democracy adopted in Gotha, 1875, having been taken over from the Lassalleans with whom the Marxists united at this Congress. Marx subjected the programme to criticism in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (International Publishers), particularly in his letter to Bracke, May 5, 1875; Engels did likewise in his letter to Bebel of March 18-28, 1875 (see pp. 62-64 and 51-62 of the *Critique*).—p. 107.